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ABSTRACT

This four-part report provides both a theoretical framework and empirical data concerning effective programs for the marginal high school student. Part 1 addresses the problem of adolescent social development as a broad educational goal. Part 2 presents a set of six case studies describing special programs in Wisconsin designed for the marginal student: (1) Reuther Education At Large (Kenosha); (2) Lincoln Educational Alternative Program (Wisconsin Rapids); (3) Paper High School (Oconomowoc); (4) School Within a School (Janesville); (5) Alternative Learning Programs (McFarland); and (6) Academic Development Opportunity Program (Milwaukee). These programs were selected for study because they appeared to be effective in reducing dropout and truancy and had been praised by both educators and students. In part 3, an interpretation of the case study data is offered that derives a set of generalizable characteristics about effective programs: These characteristics are categorized in terms of administration/organization, teacher culture, student culture, and curriculum and instruction. Part 4 begins with an exploration of one of the most promising innovations found in effective programs--experiential education. Under the assumption that public schools are not likely to implement widely this type of curriculum for the marginal student, a public policy of limited vouchers is advocated to stimulate experiential education programs. (Authors/JD)

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EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS FOR THE MARGINAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT:

A REPORT TO THE WISCONSIN GOVERNOR'S EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OFFICE

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Abstract

This four-part report provides both a theoretical framework and empirical data concerning effective programs for the marginal high school student. Part One addresses the problem of adolescent social development as a broad educational goal. Part Two presents a set of six case studies describing special programs designed for the marginal student. These programs were selected for study because they appeared to be effective in reducing dropout and truancy and had been praised by both educators and students.

In Part Three an interpretation of the case study data is offered that derives a set of generalizable characteristics about effective programs. These characteristics are categorized in terms of administration/organization, teacher culture, student culture, and curriculum and instruction. Part Four begins with an exploration of one of the most promising innovations found in effective programs--experiential education. Finally, under the assumption that public schools are not likely to implement widely this type of curriculum for the marginal student, a public policy of limited vouchers is advocated to stimulate experiential education programs.

PART ONE

DEFINING THE PROBLEM OF THE MARGINAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT: REVIEWING RESEARCH AND THEORY

Marginal Students: Policy and Program Assumptions

Approximately 25% of today's young adults leave school without a diploma. In many urban areas the dropout rate is much higher. Dropouts come from a larger group of secondary school students we term "marginal students" who can be identified by their lack of academic achievement, truancy, and conflict with the norms and expectations of the institution. The search for policy and programs that will respond to this group of students has attracted both national and local concern in recent years. The concern over marginal students is usually expressed in terms of the ultimate need to reduce unemployment, improve labor productivity, reduce welfare expenditures, and respond to the political pressures applied by the agents of the disadvantaged, minorities, and the jobless. The central belief is that marginal students become the core of the hard to employ, and this creates both a local and national problem of social instability and dependency.

Attacks upon the problem have varied depending upon assumptions about the root cause. Some strategies have sought to remediate the marginal student's basic academic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, under the assumption that these are essential tools for adult survival. Others have taken the position that the skills needed are not academic but specific vocational skills that will make the person immediately employable upon leaving school. Still others have emphasized giving marginal students work experience, counseling them about

careers, and socializing them to the kinds of attitudes and work habits required in the adult world.

Each of these solutions has its advocates, and each has been translated into policy and programs for which research data are available (Rist, 1980). While there is usually something good to be said about each of the strategies, none has produced effects that are substantial enough to be persuasive as the foundation for youth policy. The programs aimed at ameliorating the predicament of the marginal student have, in our judgment, been of limited value primarily because they are based on a much too limited and overly simple conception of the problem, i.e., that the task is to diagnose and prescribe the skill needs of individual students. The assumption that some variation of skill remediation or training will eventually alter the life circumstances of marginal students underlies most of our recent national youth policy. It is an assumption that has rarely been questioned (Taggart, 1980).

We will challenge these assumptions and conventional definitions of the marginal student problem and argue for programs based on the goal of "adolescent social development." We contend that certain developmentally defined characteristics of youth have been ignored in both conventional school programs and those designed especially for dropouts. Yet these developmental qualities are fundamental to the long-term success of young adults and their acquisition of marketable skills and competencies can be most beneficial only in the context of broad development.

The term "adolescent social development" is conceptually broad in that it refers to a range of personal qualities that are essential to success in the adult roles required of most citizens. In contrast to the youth policies and programs that assume the marginal student lacks the skills to be a productive worker, we argue that adolescents need opportunities to develop more fundamental qualities and abilities, ones that facilitate interaction with the complex institutions of our society. The extent to which an adolescent develops these qualities hinges largely on the quality of experience he or she has with school, community, work place, and the people who comprise these and other primary institutions. The concept of adolescent social development offers a more fundamental way of looking at the problems faced by the marginal student. It also offers a more powerful way of generating policy and programs that are responsive to these students.

Recent Youth Policy: Job Training and Work Experience

The evidence for the claim that recent youth policy is based on inappropriate assumptions has been accumulating for some time. A review of the youth employment programs sponsored by the Department of Labor and their effects yielded the conclusion that what youth need are not immediately saleable job skills but "coping skills" (Walther, 1976). Coping skills include self-management skills, such as control of aggression, ability to reconcile conflicting demands, and adaptation to authority, and cognitive skills such as abstract thinking, problem-solving, and frame of reference flexibility. Thus, the category of

coping skills suggests broad developmental characteristics that people must acquire to be successful at work, certainly, but in their personal lives as they interact socially with a range of people and institutions, as well.

The issue of how people acquire these characteristics is still unresolved. While some argue that coping skills are the outcome of work experience, others assume that they need to be acquired prior to entering the world of work. Regardless of the sequence, however, training in specific job or vocational skills provides the individual with only a small portion of the coping skills necessary for long-term success.

More crucial to the development of broad coping skills is provision of a context that promotes them. Such a context is provided by the most ambitious of the federal programs for marginal youth, the Job Corps. The program establishes a residential environment with norms that demand a more intense commitment to achievement than might occur if enrollees remained at home. Immersion in the new social structure increases the chances of successful remediation and the acquisition of characteristics essential for job success.

Furthermore, the Job Corps has had markedly higher success rates with older participants, those over 18 (Taggart, 1980). While all youth who complete the program subsequently show significant increases in labor force participation and weekly earnings and have lower arrest records and lower welfare usage, the young adult shows the most dramatic gains. Those over 18 who complete training are twice as likely as those under 18 with the same training to obtain a position that can lead to more than entry-level work.

Taggart offered an important observation regarding these results:

> The experience is consistent across all institutional training--teenagers tended to have higher termination rates and lower training-related placements than young adults. Even in vocational education, the body of evidence does not suggest that secondary vocational education increases subsequent employment and earnings. Rather, it is a post-secondary vocational education which produces the most gains. (1980, pp. 5-6)

The differential success rate of young adults may be due to their greater maturity and motivation and to their perceptions of the requirements and effort needed to succeed in the labor market. In short, these marginal youth in the Job Corps developed many of the characteristics identified with the category of coping skills.

The Job Corps serves only a small percentage of marginal youth. Instead, at the national and local school levels, one of the most popular strategies with marginal students has been some form of work experience. A range of outcomes are claimed for giving youth work experience while attending high school: exposure to careers, acquisition of adult work habits, interaction with adults, learning responsible behavior, learning practical problem-solving skills, increased academic motivation, and life-long learning skills (The Work-Education Consortium of the National Manpower Institute, 1978). Impressive as this may sound, there is little in the way of research evidence to support these claims coming from the field of vocational education.

Research on work experience and its effects on adolescent development is scant (Hamilton & Crouter, 1980). Only a few tentative conclusions can be made regarding the link between work and growth in broad social, personal, and cognitive factors. Work may have some positive

effects such as teaching the responsible use of money, industrious behavior, and an orientation and interest in adults.

One of the few studies documenting the potential of work to stimulate development is Elder's longitudinal analysis of the effects of work on boys of the Depression era (cited by Hamilton & Crouter, 1980). Forced to enter the adult world of work because of family need, the boys had an extended set of experiences with adults which made them want to grow and become more adult-like. Also, the immersion in the adult world increased their independence and responsibility. Nonetheless, while Elder suggests a positive relationship between work and development, his findings may not apply to today's youth who may have different view of work than did an earlier generation in a more distressed time.

The general weakness of the evidence showing positive effects of work on youth led the federal government's Interagency Panel for Research and Development on Adolescence (1973) to be skeptical about the claims for work experience. The Panel questioned "whether actual experience in a real working situation promotes social and cognitive development beyond that which classroom learning can provide" (p. 206). A more recent review of several empirical studies which relate work experience to self-concept, self-esteem, academic achievement, attitudes toward school, and work values is equally skeptical (Holloway, 1980). In one study, delinquent youth participated in a work-study program which included paid work, vocational training, counseling, and tutoring, as well as academic classes. Participation in the work experience component produced no significant change in self-perception. Another study measured self-concept and academic achievement in a group of

potential tenth-grade dropouts. A work-study program was the intervention for two experimental groups, but no treatment effects were found between these and control groups. In still another study using several combinations of intervention, including work-experience, no change in self-concept was found.

In summary, despite the fact that billions of federal dollars have gone into a range of programs to promote work and skill training for marginal youth, there is no hard evidence that such programs have much impact on the human qualities needed for long-term success in the world of work. Holloway (1980) concluded:

> [T]he critic of schools can now become the critic of government programs and suggest that employment programs as presently constituted do not provide the kinds of experiences which would lead to improvement of adolescent development. (p. 91)

The focus we have identified for the marginal student is on the problem of development rather than on skill acquisition. This is an important shift because it also clarifies the task of the school. To view schooling for the marginal student as primarily vocational training and the criterion of success as immediate employability is mistaken. It corrupts the concept of education and emphasizes a narrow, short-run version of training that is a disservice to the marginal student and discriminates against him. What is most likely to occur is a form of social tracking that leads youth into the frustration of a series of entry-level jobs that are neither developmental nor rewarding.

Adolescent Social Development: The Bond Element

For policy makers and practitioners who look to the research literature for information about effective programs for the marginal student, the fare is meagre. However, such information can be gained by looking at the literature in the field of juvenile delinquency. The lessons of juvenile delinquency research which are applicable to the marginal student form two sides of the same coin: on the one hand, programs that treat individuals as pathological are relatively ineffective; on the other hand, a developmental focus is a more promising response to the problem. Delinquency theory suggests that youth who are adjudged delinquent have not developed strong social bonds with the norms, values, and roles required by the primary institutions of the society. The bonding relationship between youth and institutions is a useful way of addressing the marginal student problem, as well.

There are several reasons for assuming that research on delinquency contributes to our understanding of the school problems faced by marginal students and high school dropouts. Hirschi (1969) found that 79% of his population of juvenile delinquents disliked or were indifferent to school. Most of the students in trouble with the law were also in trouble with their school. It is generally recognized that juvenile delinquents make up an important subcategory of the marginal student population. Given that the conditions associated with delinquency and dropout are similar, it is useful to study the large

volume of research on delinquency programs to identify strategies that have been effective in treating delinquents.

In an extensive review of the theory and research concerning causes and prevention of delinquency, Johnson, Bird, and Little (1979) pointed to a basic contradiction between what theory and research said and what programs practiced. Most programs operate on the assumption that the cause of the delinquency problem lies in the pathology of individual youth. However, a major body of research looks for cause in the social interactions and relations these youth experience with primary institutions. Johnson et al. concluded that "research findings over the past 40 years have pointed fairly consistently to the ineffectiveness of preventive or remedial programs targeted on individuals, yet these programs have persisted and proliferated" (p. 31).

Programs focusing on individual pathology are typically based on one or more of the following treatments: social casework, psychotherapy, counseling, special education, and behavior modification. Romig (1978) reviewed the evaluation of 78 projects using such treatments; 100,000 youth were involved. The nine projects that used a casework approach had either neutral or negative results; that is, for some treatments delinquency actually increased compared to control groups. Psychotherapy was used on 1,600 youth in ten projects; for seven of the ten there were no significant differences. Positive effects resulted from only six of the 28 group counseling programs for 1,800 adolescents, with the other 22 projects showing either neutral or negative results. Of 16 special academic education programs, only one showed reduced delinquency and only four showed increased academic

performance. Of the 14 behavior modification programs for some 2,000 youth, ten claimed positive effects, but only within a narrow context; changes in behavior such as tardiness, school attendance, and classroom disruption were produced, but these did not transfer to situations outside a particular classroom or building.

This battery of strategies is frequently advocated as a response to the marginal student problem. However, the strategies suffer from a common flaw: each tends to focus on the individual student as though he or she is the problem. A more productive focus examines the interactions youth have with institutional norms, roles, and expectations. Weise and Hawkins (1979) considered this in their extensive review of delinquency literature. They suggested that delinquency is a problem of "social development" (p. 30). The socialization of youth occurs in "stages" that can be identified by passage through preschool, elementary, junior high, and high school. At each of these stages a different combination of socializing factors is brought to bear on youth by the institution of the school.

Prior to school the family is, of course, the main influence on a child. When children enter the public school system, that institution begins to assume an increasing influence as a socializing agent. As youth move into junior high, the school begins to share its influence with peers who provide a range of roles and behaviors for pre-adolescents. The high school years are accompanied by an increasing influence from peers and a corresponding decline in the power of home and formal school. However, since the peer group is frequently based at school, the informal power of the institution is enhanced.

To account for this dynamic and longitudinal view of socialization, Weis and Hawkins integrated social control theory and cultural deviance theory into what can be termed social bond theory. Social control theory emphasizes conformity to a set of standards that govern behavior. These dominant standards are "conventional" in that they are basic to the institutions of family, church, school, work place, and the law. The acceptance of the conventional standards governing behavior in relation to these institutions is achieved through the process of social bonding.

The elements in social bonding are attachment, commitment, belief, and involvement in the social life of these institutions. Socialization of youth occurs when there is attachment to parents and other significant adults who represent this conventional social order. Attachment to conventional individuals leads to a commitment to participate in the primary institutions of society and to accept the requirements of those institutions. Finally, successful involvement in the roles established by the institutions must occur to maintain and strengthen attachment, commitment, and belief.

From an institutional perspective it is necessary to provide opportunities that promote bonding to conventional adult roles, norms, and behaviors. These opportunities must be available so youth can develop the sense of social integration required to avoid alienation. Social bonding can be seen as the opposite of alienation: integration, engagement, and connectedness. Alienation, on the other hand, results in fragmentation, estrangement, and separation. The latter characterize

many of the problems of contemporary schools and modern society (Newmann, 1981).

The second major theoretical strand reviewed by Weis and Hawkins is cultural deviance. This is concerned with the process through which delinquent behavior and values are learned and legitimated. This theory juxtaposes dominant cultural standards and the subcultural values and behaviors learned through family, peer group, and community. Delinquency is the result of acting upon subcultural standards that conflict with dominant standards. Cultural transmission explains the persistence of deviant patterns of action over time among certain ethnic and social class groups (Ogbu, 1974). Cultural deviance theory provides an important role for the peer group at the secondary school. The peer group exercises significant influence over adolescents and can direct youth toward either conventional or deviant behavior.

The explanatory power of this theoretical orientation can be seen in Willis' work (1977), which presents a concrete example of adolescent conflict with school. In his ethnography Willis describes the resistance to institutional demands for conformity and participation offered by a peer group. The group is the "lads," all of whom share a working class background in England. Through cultural transmission from the family and community the "lads" acquired a set of norms and behaviors which are inconsistent with the expectations of the formal school system. The "lads" are clearly not attached to either the adults of the school or those peers who conform to school norms. In fact, there is open contempt for both conventional adults and adolescents. The result is the "lads" believe the school is inefficacious for them and refuse to

participate in institutional activities. Their resistance and rejection of the school leads tc trouble with the institution and into minor conflict with the law. Rejecting the school, the "lads" identify instead with the factory life of their families and social class; they emulate particular attitudes and behaviors of the working class and upon leaving school they take up factory jobs. Thus, "cultural reproduction" occurs as the subcultural norms and behaviors of the "lads" are unintentionally reinforced by the school because that institution offers these youth nothing but a middle-class alternative with which they cannot identify.

In many respects, therefore, the problems of the marginal student are explicable through the social bonding and cultural deviance theories. At base the problem is one of social bonding to the conventional social order, especially the school. Marginal students are either passive or nonparticipants in school activities; in more extreme cases, they exhibit conflict with institutional expectations. Typically, they are in trouble over rules of attendance, tardiness, language, and smoking. They fail courses because of inattentiveness and unwillingness to engage in sedentary work. Conflict with adults occurs despite having adequate intellectual and academic ability.

Making social bonding a criterion for adolescent social development emphasizes that this development is stimulated by positive interactions with institutions like the school. Social development is not merely the rote learning of roles, values, norms, and conforming behaviors. Instead, it is a process in which adolescents change their view of themselves and others as they participate in community life. A

significant task of school, therefore, is to provide the kinds of experiences and qualities of relationship that stimulate adolescent social development.

There is a subtle but critical point to be made about social development; it implies that individuals must acquire "conventional" characteristics that enable them to participate in broad community life. In other words, at minimum, an adolescent should be prepared to enter the adult world of work, parenthood, and citizenship. The ability to participate in conventional adult roles is necessary but not sufficient as a goal of adolescent social development. We are not advocating a conception of development that envisions a conformist and docile subgroup of willing workers. Rather we believe it is a reasonable goal of schools to help marginal students achieve the same kind of development that now seems skewed largely to middle-class youth who are favored with certain environments and institutional relationships. Our objective is to help marginal youth learn to function in conventional roles because it can give them further access to opportunities.

Social bonding theory is useful in explaining the underlying problem exhibited by marginal students in school. However, it is an incomplete guide to educators. The theory is incomplete for two reasons. First, bond theory does not indicate what school lacks that prevents it from succeeding with marginal students as a socializing and bonding agency. Yet it is essential to focus on the failure of the institution to provide bonding for the marginal student; otherwise we only label these students as suffering from another kind of pathology. If the marginal student is seen as "sick" and in need of treatment, a

version of "blaming the victim" is likely to continue. Instead, what must occur is a reform of the institution so that bonding rather than conflict and rejection is offered. In short, school must become a social bonding agency for those who now find themselves on the outside.

A second problem with bond theory is its lack of a complete concept of adolescent social development. Presumably, as children grow older and move from elementary to junior and senior high school, the stages of social development suggested by Weis and Hawkins are qualitatively different. There is something different about the way an elementary student and a high school student can see the world. We need a much clearer notion of what these developmental stages mean in terms of youths' perception of social relations.

Adolescent Social Development: The Cognitive Element

The second element in defining the concept of adolescent social development is concerned with cognitive qualities of human reasoning. There are two criteria for social development that are essentially cognitive. One is the ability to engage in what Piaget calls "formal operations" or abstract thinking. The second criterion concerns sociocentric thinking. This implies the ability to think abstractly but it also signals the shift from an ego-centric to an other-directed view of social relations and events.

Abstract thinking is essential if one is to understand and manipulate the symbols of modern society. This is the kind of thinking that persons need to do when engaged in the manipulation of complex technical

knowledge. Our contemporary society emphasizes this kind of thinking and in the computer age many of the best jobs require facility in abstract thinking. According to Ralph Mosher (1980) "there is substantial evidence that less than half of American adolescents can think this way" (p. 2). Since business and industry place great importance on this ability, the economic options available to the marginal student who has not developed in this way are sharply limited. Institutionally there needs to be a redefinition of schooling to increase the probability that abstract thinking ability will be stimulated in the marginal student population.

The sociocentric viewpoint includes an understanding of both the complexity of social relations and events in our society and the rights and responsibilities that accompany citizenship in modern corporate society. The citizen must have a grasp of the interdependency that exists among social events and institutions. From a developmental point of view, there is a need for youth to move from a world view that is largely self-centered to one that is "we-centered." This shift in perspective is important if people are to have an accurate view of events in the world, but it is also essential if they are to acquire an understanding of the legitimate rights and interests of other people and groups. From a social concern, mutuality and reciprocity of rights is a basic ingredient of stable social life. A society can not expect its citizens to take initiative and assume responsibilities in an effective manner unless they have developed a sociocentric point of view.

To our knowledge no one has defined the problem of adolescent social development to include social bonding and sociocentric and

abstract thinking. Mosher (1980), in the tradition of Lawrence Kohlberg (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972), has written about development in a broad way to include both abstract and sociocentric thinking. Mosher argues that youth who develop in a "normal" fashion eventually come to a watershed point. On one side, they maintain a limited, self-centered, selfish view of the world; on the other, they adopt a more inclusive sociocentered and socially aware perspective. The former perspective is labelled "pre-conventional" and is of a "presocial" nature, while the latter is labelled "conventional" and is governed by a concern for maintaining positive human relationships as well as social order.

The terms "pre-conventional" and "conventional" must be understood in the context of developmental theory. They refer to structured ways of thinking as opposed to specific cultural or social beliefs and practices. In reference to adolescent development these terms signal two competing tendencies in the way youth view the world. These tensions can also be described as concrete and abstract, or formal, thought. From a social development standpoint, Mosher sees these tensions pulling youth in "two predominantly and qualitatively different ways of thinking about school subjects, oneself, other people, what is right and wrong, and a selfish or social way of being" (p. 15). As a developmentalist, Mosher claims that one form of thought naturally follows the other in a sequential unfolding, but their progression is neither rapid nor certain.

If the adolescent maintains a firm foothold at the preconventional level, he retains a view of social relations emphasizing self-protectiveness, narrow self-interest, and maximized personal gains.

This form of "instrumental hedonism," according to Mosher, means that one does what is necessary to please oneself or to get ahead. In its most primitive form "might makes right" to preconventional youth, and even the most advanced preconventional thought requires that there be a concrete exchange of favors or goods: "conformity, doing what others want, what teachers or parents say is right, is for sale" (p. 5). This view places educators in the role of bargaining agent, but traditional high school programs have little exchange value for students whose participation hinges on such concrete notions of reciprocity.

Conventional thought is the emergent and competing view of the world for the adolescent. It pulls the person toward an other-directed view. The youth wants to be a "good" boy or girl. This goodness is defined in terms of what other people or society set as standards. The adolescent comes to view his own actions from the perspective of others and his thinking takes a turn toward social awareness and responsibility. Conformity of thought and behavior can be directed solely toward the adolescent peer group or it can be directed more generally to significant others in the adult society.

Movement by the adolescent into the conventional stage must be seen as an advance in thinking even when the particular form this takes is conformity to peer group norms, values, and behaviors. This is especially important if these particulars are considered unacceptable to the mainstream adult world. At an extreme, the youth gang achieves conformity and loyalty from members, even though it also engages in activities which are contrary to the interests of the larger society. Nevertheless, even such a primitive and inadequate form of conventionality

represents an advance in thinking that is necessary before the adolescent will search for acceptance and respect from others. It is this search for conventional approval that has the potential for constructive thought and action. The importance of this movement from a perspective that is self-centered to one that is social-centered cannot be underestimated in terms of consequences for both the individual and society.

That some youth, even adults, never get beyond the concrete and the selfish way of thinking seems apparent. Here we can recognize the personal and social costs that tend to fall heaviest on the marginal student. Those who fail to make the transition from concrete to abstract and pre-conventional to conventional thinking carry a severe handicap into the adult world of work and social relations. It is only with an ability to think abstractly that a person can make use of skills, engage in roles, and perform work that is central to our complex and technological society. A sociocentric perspective is required to engage in the kind of actions necessary to be accepted in most modern social settings. The characteristics of these actions are conventional but they are necessary, if not sufficient, qualities for individuals to have access to a satisfying life and to contribute to society.

It seems apparent that the problems of the marginal student have not been defined in terms of adolescent social development if we examine what is offered as experiences in traditional academic courses, remedial courses in the basic skills, job skill training, and work experience. For example, an examination of the best academic course in a traditional high school curriculum reveals that it frequently presupposes the ability of students to engage in abstract thinking or to be receptive to

a conventional and sociocentric point of view. The marginal student who has not made this advance is necessarily lost in such courses because a kind of foreign language is the currency of the classroom. If the marginal student has not yet made the transition to formal and conventional thought, it is precisely this task that needs to be undertaken.

The typical alternatives for the marginal student--remediation, vocational skills training, and job experience--miss the problem also, but for a different reason. These strategies respond to students with exclusively concrete and pre-conventional forms of thinking and experience. The emphasis on basic skill remediation, for example, is often rote and mindless in its conception, repeatedly going over the same ground. Work experience programs, like those sponsored by CETA, frequently reinforce an egocentric point of view by appealing to short-term economic gain. Those programs which have components of behavior modification, counseling, therapy, and casework, focus on the "self" and serve primarily to entrench an egocentric view. In the absence of any deliberate strategy to promote abstract and conventional thought through some qualitatively different experience, the success of most programs for the marginal student will be sharply limited.

In exploring the concept of adolescent social development, we have stressed the need to move youth from concrete to abstract thinking and from a pre-conventional to conventional or sociocentric way of viewing social relations. Along with these cognitive changes, we argued for the need to provide the social bonding that is the cement in a structure of social relationships. These three tasks can be considered the accountability standards for judging the adequacy of public schooling.

Can the public schools provide the kinds of experiences required to facilitate this broad development for those most in need, i.e., marginal students who come disproportionately from the ranks of the poor and minorities?

In Part Two of this report, we present six case studies of programs for the marginal student which appear to have a positive impact on their students. The data presented do not strictly speak to the problem of adolescent social development as presented in Part One. There was, instead, an effort to gather data about a number of questions that concern educators who are developing alternative strategies in public high schools. The descriptions of each program are only lightly interpreted for the reader; we intentionally describe a wide range of structures and strategies that have achieved some success with the marginal student. In Part Three, however, generalizations about effective programs are offered. They are based on a collective interpretation of the data. Here we offer a model for alternative programs that can guide practicing educators who seek to promote effective schooling for the marginal student.

Finally, in Part Four we examine in the some detail the single most promising finding from the case study data; i.e., the use of an "experiential" curriculum to stimulate the broad conception of development that was called for here. The report closes with the suggestion that some form of limited voucher policy may be needed to create of quality experiential education programs.

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PART TWO

SIX CASE STUDIES DESCRIBING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS FOR THE MARGINAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Introduction to Part Two

Since 1979 the principal investigator and his associates have examined the problem of the high school dropout. One dimension of the work was the search for programs and schools that are unusually effective with the marginal student. During the past three years the research team visited a variety of schools to discuss with educators the problems they face and the strategies they use to respond to students who apparently benefit little from school.

A second dimension of the work was to offer the 1981 UW-Madison Summer Institute for Dropout Prevention. Sponsored by GETO and DPI, this four-week course helped the staff from six interested schools develop alternative programs for the marginal student.

Following the search for effective programs and the provision of technical assistance in program design, the final aspect of the work was the determination of characteristics common to six programs judged to be effective with the marginal student.* Two of the schools at the 1981 Institute offered effective programs during the 1981-82 school year: the Kenosha Reuther REAL program and the Milwaukee West Division ADOP program. In addition, information gathered around the state indicated that at least four other programs were "effective" with marginal students:

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*For the purposes of selecting sites for this study, we defined as "effective" programs with the following criteria: (1) reduction of student truancy; (2) increase in credits earned by students; and (3) testimony by students and educators that the program is successful.

LEAP at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln, Paper High School at Oconomowoc, ALP at McFarland, and SWS at Janesville Parker.

Specifically, the following questions guided the study of the six programs:

1a. What organizational and administrative characteristics define each program?

b. To what extent are these organizational and administrative characteristics common across the programs?

2a. What is the dominant "teacher culture" within each program; i.e., what beliefs and practices typify the teachers in each program?

b. To what extent is this culture common across the programs?

3a. What curriculum characteristics does each program have?

b. To what extent are these common across the programs?

4. What effects does each program have on its students, i.e., what impact is there on academic achievement, vocational knowledge and skills, and the overall social development of the youth?

5. To what extent are these effects similar across programs, i.e., to what extent are they differentiated due to differences in organization, teacher culture, or curriculum?

Four persons on the research team sought to answer these questions: Gary Wehlage, director of the project; Calvin Stone, associate director; and Nancy Lesko and Craig Nauman, graduate student assistants. Each member of the team was the primary researcher at one or two sites. In

addition, all members of the team became familiar with the sites through at least a brief period of direct observation.

The research strategy involved non-participant observation, participant observation, and interviews of students and teachers in the program. Typically a team member spent two to five days visiting a site, wrote a summary of the observations and interviews, and distributed this to other team members for review and group discussion. This discussion produced further questions about the program, clarification of interpretations the researcher was offering, and redirection for the researcher when that person returned to the site.

In addition to observation and interview data, the team also collected information about credits earned by students, their academic achievement, and attendance. Comparable information about these variables was not available when the study terminated at each site.

At the end of the data collection period, each primary researcher wrote a description of the programs he studied. The description was circulated among the team members for criticism and revisions were made based on suggestions from the team. Educators at each site were also consulted about the description of their program to ensure that there were no errors of fact in the draft.

This process of investigation and review by a research team provides a reasonably clear and objective description of the several programs. The accounts emphasize those features of schooling that are worth considering by other educators who wish to be effective with marginal students. Criticism of the programs is mild in most respects because they are fine programs staffed with able people. In each setting,

however, some limitations or problems need to be considered by those who find ideas here they would like to replicate.

REAL

Reuther Education At Large
Reuther Alternative High School
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Reuther Education At Large

The REAL program is part of Reuther Alternative High School in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Reuther is located in the old Bradford High School building, formerly Kenosha High School, in the central city area. The building was constructed in the early part of the twentieth century and has the solid, massive character of many old urban schools. There are large terrazzo halls and stairways, oak woodwork, high ceilings and windows, and a look of tradition and institutional permanence that is missing from the more recent styles of school architecture.

The principal of Reuther, Tom Synott, is an able administrator, strongly committed to successful alternative public education. He is empathetic with parents and students who come to Reuther seeking an institutional climate different from the one they experienced in the traditional high schools of Kenosha. Synott is highly visible in the school and his leadership style is personal rather than bureaucratic or managerial. He takes an active interest in the development of new approaches to teaching and curriculum and reads widely in contemporary journals about educational innovation. He was an active member of the team of educators from Reuther who planned the REAL program at a summer workshop on the UW-Madison campus during the summer of 1981.

As an alternative school, Reuther is authorized a student population of 550 by the Kenosha Unified Board of Education. While a

portion of this population is drawn directly from the five junior highs in the system, a majority of the students transfer from Bradford and Tremper after getting into academic difficulties at these two traditional high schools. As an alternative school, Reuther's mandate from the district's board is constrained by the same requirements for graduation as the two traditional schools. Nonetheless, an alternative character is created, partly through the sense of community that is possible because of its small size, partly through an "open campus" policy which eliminates the tension of requiring students to be in the building all day, and partly through the commitment of the staff to offer a supportive relationship with students who have had school problems in the past. In addition, the school day extends through evening hours to enable working students to continue their education.

Each student at Reuther must sign a contract to abide by certain school rules and earn a minimum of three credits a year toward the fifteen required for graduation. Failure to fulfill the contract is grounds for dropping students from school. During the 1979-80 school year, 750 students enrolled at one time or another with 200 either dropping out or being asked to leave because they broke their contracts. Contract breaking is part of a cycle in which the failure to earn sufficient credits one semester makes graduation seem an increasingly remote possibility, the net result being discouragement and, eventually, a decision to drop out. The REAL program is designed especially for those students who are contract breakers, in need of services not already available at Reuther, and who want

to graduate.

Contract breakers are described by the REAL staff as having some or all of the following problems: poor attendance, academic skill deficiencies, low self-concept, poor decision-making skills, and a lack of self-discipline. While some of these problems can be traced to conditions existing in the students' homes, the REAL staff believes that blaming the family or community from which the students come will not result in positive changes in students' school performance. The staff assumes that its task is to begin working with these students to overcome the behaviors and attitudes which have resulted in school failure. To achieve this task the staff offers students a different set of experiences than they have previously found in school. At REAL's core is a set of community experiences in which the students are highly active in service to others and the community. In addition, every effort is made to integrate classroom knowledge and skills with the kinds of experiences students have in the community.

Besides offering a different conception of school work for the potential dropout, the program also seeks to change the behaviors and attitudes that have resulted in school failure. It is important for students to experience success in relation to school and to develop a degree of commitment to the staff and the program. In the words of the REAL staff, a goal of the program is to "bond the students to the program." To achieve this goal, the program has a somewhat tighter structure than exists for most of Reuther's students. This tighter program structure includes being self-contained, offering close,

personal interaction between staff and students, providing clear expectations, and careful monitoring of student attendance and achievement.

Thus, the educational strategy in REAL is to offer both a different organizational structure and a different kind of school work than marginal students experienced in the past. The self-contained structure, allowing close interaction between student and teacher, gives greater guidance and support to those who have had difficulty sustaining their commitment to school. The different kind of school work integrates academic classroom work with an active and "hands-on" experiential curriculum in community sites.

Despite its departure from conventional structure and curriculum, REAL has some rather traditional goals. In a statement written by the staff the following are intended student outcomes:

1. To increase academic skill levels in reading, math, and language arts.
2. To improve self-esteem.
3. To develop a sense of responsibility.
4. To increase awareness of career possibilities, training needed for these careers, and the required job-seeking skills.
5. To practice decision-making through participation in program governance and development of group projects.

With these objectives underlying the program, a group of 24 contract breakers, mostly juniors, was selected from a population of about twice that size to begin REAL in the fall of 1981. All students were volunteers who were selected by the staff after being interviewed and hearing a description of the program.

REAL's staff consists of a counselor/coordinator, Pat DeRemer, a math teacher, May Nell Sauls, and two English-social studies teachers, Bill Boyle and Freddi Stevens. The counselor/coordinator is the only full-time person in REAL; all the others have part-time teaching responsibilities in the regular Reuther program. The students are scheduled as a group and take all of their courses from the four staff members.

The self-contained nature of the program allows for considerable flexibility on the part of both students and staff. Blocks of time are available for extended work in class or outside the school. Program flexibility and the extensive contact between the staff and students permits students to earn up to seven credits in two semesters, if they are willing to engage in additional work. This is one of the attractive features of the program, giving students who are credit-deficient hope that they can graduate within a reasonable time, some even with their normal graduating class.

Experiential Education: Nursing Homes and Day Care Centers

A number of experiential projects were considered by the staff and students as REAL began in the fall of 1981. One possibility was to have students offer a home maintenance program for low-income elderly people in the city. Another consideration was to develop a tutoring program for elementary school students. A third suggestion was to establish a day care center in the Reuther building. For a vareity of reasons, each of these projects was rejected, and it was agreed that all students would do volunteer work in either a day care center or a nursing home. As it turned out, this decision was a good

one since both students and teachers believe that the work at these sites was stimulating, valuable, and had considerable impact on the students.

The counselor/coordinator, Pat DeRemer, played a central role in organizing and monitoring the community experience component. Her tasks included recruiting the sites, maintaining a liason with a supervisor at each site, and monitoring student performance and attendance. It is generally agreed by the REAL staff that continual site monitoring, in person and by phone is essential for success in the community experience component. Pat also taught a career course in which students were asked to reflect about the nature of their work, the problems they encountered, the relationships which developed among people, and the expectations which were placed on those who worked in the setting.

A visit to a day care center provides the opportunity to see the community experience component of REAL firsthand. Students are engaged in a variety of activities. There are stories to read, games to play, songs to sing and the A, B, C's to recite. Many of the volunteers seem to have a "special" child to talk about, a child who needs extra attention or who takes a particular liking to the student. Laura, for example, is at a Head Start center with about a dozen pre-schoolers. She says the best part of the job is "seeing the children learn and grow." One boy can now tie his shoes, another child has learned some of the alphabet. She points out a little boy who often "clings" to her because he wants a lot of attention. Laura thinks he is very "insecure" and she feels a need to help him as much as possible.

The teacher at the center expressed enthusiasm for the help that Laura is providing: "With two of us here, there are so many more things we can do with the children." The teacher comments that Laura has improved in her work with children because she has overcome her shyness. When she began at the center, her voice was so soft the children couldn't hear her. Soon, however, the teacher saw her confidence increase and she began to speak up and take more initiative with the various activities of the center. Today Laura is planning to attend the local technical college when she graduates in order to obtain the credentials required by day care teachers.

St. Joseph's Nursing Home is another site where REAL students work. One girl works with a Head Start day care center located in the basement of the home. Two girls work as aides to the staff in the nursing home. A boy is assigned to the maintenance man to assist in various tasks around the building, some of which include direct contact with the patients.

The Director of Services at the home is quick to testify that REAL students make a valuable contribution. The contribution is of two kinds. First, she sees the students supplying much-needed services to patients whom the existing staff is unable to serve because of the press of other demands. For example, two girls made a cake to help celebrate a patient's birthday. According to the Director, the girls suggested the project because they knew none of the regular staff would have the time. They took the initiative to get the supplies from the cook and brought them into the large day room where many of the elderly gather. The girls could be heard going through the recipe

step by step and conversing with several women nearby concerning the relative merits of various recipes and methods of baking. One woman teased that her recipe would be vastly superior to the one the girls were using. The girls laughed and continued with their work and the good-natured conversation.

The Director of Services mentioned that there is a second contribution the volunteers make to St. Joseph's. Their very presence brings variety to the scene, breaking the routine for everyone in the institution. The interjection of new, young faces into the lives of the elderly eases the age segregation of the home. Many of the patients, she says, genuinely look forward to seeing the high school students each day.

The Director noted the positive effect of the experience on the volunteers, as well: "The two girls have come a long way. They are less shy with adults. They take more initiative and can be given responsibilities in an unsupervised situation." The words, "adult" and "responsible," are used several times to describe the general character of the girls. The Director concludes that the community experience component of REAL is beneficial to both these students and the home.

The obvious case of success presented by the two girls is tempered somewhat by the mixed results obtained with the boy assigned to the maintenance man. While the Director believes he is "benefitting a lot from his relationship to the home," he presents a problem because of sporadic attendance. Pat DeRemer explains that part of his problem involves transportation to the site. The boy has to catch a bus

early in the morning in order to make a transfer connection that will get him to the home by 8:00 a.m., when all students are to be at work. He apparently finds it difficult to keep his schedule and on some days he simply does not appear. Pat has spoken with him on several occasions about the need to be punctual and reliable, but counseling has not corrected the problem. There is some talk between Pat and the Director about the possibility of terminating the boy's job at the home.

Shady Lawn Nursing Home is a third REAL site. The Director of Services at this home echoes the enthusiasm of the Director at St. Joseph's. Moreover, her strong endorsement of the program stands despite some problems, especially in the first weeks. The working out of these problems illustrates the educative nature of the experiential component, however. For example, the Director terminated a student because of his erratic attendance and work habits, perhaps due to marijuana smoking. She described the boy as too apathetic on some occasions to be of any benefit to the home or to himself. One day he had an argument with the Director concerning his behavior and she dismissed him after explaining in some detail why she felt it was in his interest as well as the home's that he not continue. Later he apologized to her for his conduct and asked for reinstatement, which she granted. After a brief period at Shady Lawn, however, he decided to withdraw and continue his community experience at a day care center.

The Director connected these events to a subsequent "very interesting encounter with the boy." It happens that she lives in the same neighborhood as the student. On several occasions when she walked home from work, he intercepted her and began friendly conversations. He

seemed to bear no grudge over their earlier conflict. He spoke positively of his experiences at the nursing home, and at one point asserted that she had done the right thing in dismissing him. He claimed that he "learned something" from her action. Apparently, he reevaluated his behavior, improved it, and perceived an unpleasant situation as having positive results.

On a more general level, the Director is convinced that all of the students at the home benefit personally from their volunteer work: "There is a need for these young people to begin taking adult responsibility." She believes it is necessary for them to become "disciplined" in their willingness to accept and carry out responsibilities: "This obligation gives them that chance." She mentions students wanting to have a time card so they can punch-in like paid staff. She also relates that the students want her to use the same criteria to evaluate their performance that she uses with the regular staff. These indicate to her an acceptance of adult responsibilities. She believes that "at this point in their lives they need to feel they can do a good job--accomplish something." From her perspective, care of the elderly is a good vehicle by which youth can experience success when given adult responsibilities.

Responsibilities routinely taken by students include helping patients dress, use their wheel chairs, write letters, play cards and games, work with crafts, and engage in exercises. Exercise time at Shady Lawn provides a good example of the role the students have at this site. Bill, one of the students, comments that some of the patients will not get themselves to the room on the first floor where the

exercise session is held. He points across the room to a man in a wheel chair: "He just won't go unless I take him." Bill helps the man maneuver his wheel chair across the hall and into the elevator. For the exercise session, Margie brings in a record player and, along with Gwen, the only black student working at the home, leads the residents in exercises in time with music. The lively music is background for a series of wrist, arm, ankle, and leg movements which Margie and Gwen call out and demonstrate. At one point, Gwen passes out plastic hoops which are raised over the head and then toward the toes in a rhythmic cadence. These routines continue for about fifteen minutes. At the conclusion, Gwen goes around the room collecting the hoops. As she does, several of the residents warmly clasp her hand and speak to her. Thus, meeting their responsibilities for the exercise session involves Bill, Margie, and Gwen in caring exercises as well.

An important part of the community experience component of REAL is the weekly "reflective" period during which students are challenged to think about their experiences. Sometimes they tell about experiences and discuss them with their peers. On other occasions the teacher asks them to write in a journal which each student keeps throughout the semester. The journals reveal a sense of what students encounter at their volunteer sites and how they react to their experiences.

For example, Gwen writes in response to the question, what knowledge or skill did you learn this week:

> Yesterday morning I was given the opportunity to watch a nurse's aide clean and redress a colostomy. A colostomy is when they have to bypass the large intestine because it can no longer be used. So they make a small hole in the right side, they cut the small intestine where it is joined

> to the large intestine and then they seal up the large intestine and pull the cut end of the small intestine through the hole and that's where she defacates. Then they put cotton around the hole so it won't bleed all over. Then they put a plastic covering around the hole that the little plastic bag attaches to. And they hold it in place with an elastic belt. This experience is the most educational experience I had since I've been at St. Joe's.

On another occasion, she describes the cooperative, friendly relationships that developed between her and other staff members:

> I found out that by working together and being nice how many friends you can acquire in a short time. For instance, today I was working with this nurse's aide named Yvonne. And in the few weeks I've worked there, how much trust she has in me and I in her. When I'm broke, she lends me money, and when she needs work done but doesn't have the time I'll do it for her. Yvonne is not the only nurse's aide I have a relationship like this. Some of the residents and sisters all have this friendship and I'm proud to have friends like these. And the're proud to know me.

A theme of friendship built upon trust and reciprocity is apparent in this account. For Gwen, as for most young people, the development of friendships with adults in a work setting is important evidence of successful entry into the adult role. Such positive experiences are important for all youth but they are particularly important for marginal students who have not had much success in school.

Students also comment on the satisfaction they receive from knowing they contribute to the welfare of others who genuinely need assistance. Roland writes:

> It made me realize how important my little work is to the residents and staff. The work I do I enjoy very much because I feel real good about it.

All people need to feel that they are making a worthwhile contribution to the welfare of others. Marginal students' self-value is enhanced

by serving others.

Their valuations of those they serve also change during the semester. Roland observes:

> I have changed my attitude toward the elderly. I feel more secure with them now than I did when I first started there. I can talk to them more freely than when I started. I have a lot more respect for older people.

This view is typical for most students who work in nursing homes.

Thus, examination of students' journals indicates that work in the day care centers and nursing homes is seen as significant because it is worthwhile to serve others in a mutually caring relationship. Students express satisfaction at being able to accept responsibility and take initiative. Accomplishment and making new friendships with adults are seen as important outcomes of this work. In addition, students repeatedly say they are learning a lot about "life" and how to deal with others in "real" situations.

Experiential Education: Renovating a House

A second major experiential learning component, the renovation of a building at the Kemper Center, was added to the REAL program in the spring of 1982. The Center, owned by Kenosha County and part of the parks system, is located on the shore of Lake Michigan and is being developed into a cultural and recreational area.

One of the buildings on the grounds is a large two-story house that was pieced together in three sections at different times. The house is now called the Upstairs/Downstairs Gallery and is used as a place for artists to rent studio space and display their artwork. However, the condition of the gallery was poor. The building was not

insulated and the walls, door frames, and floors sagged badly. The plumbing was unreliable and the electrial wiring was a patchwork system that had become a safety concern. Since one of the original objectives of the REAL program was to teach students home maintenance and repair, the possibility of renovating the Kemper Gallery was appealing.

However, the rationale for the project went deeper than teaching students specific vocational skills. Bill Boyle argued the case for having the students involved in the renovation in this way:

> It has been a perplexing concern for many educators that students with high potential continue to drop out of school. But recent literature on this dilemma indicates a need for such students to engage in active hands-on, community-oriented projects through which they can demonstrate and learn responsible social roles. Apparently, many students learn to work effectively when their academic skill development is integrated with tangible projects that have positive effects on themselves and the community.

The staff in the REAL program, along with Richard Regner, Kenosha Unified School District Vocational Education Coordinator, proposed a demonstration project using REAL students and private contractors to be funded by DPI. The proposal was funded for about $40,000 and the Riley Construction and Gagliardi Electric Companies were contracted with regard to using REAL students and staff in the renovation of the Gallery. Pat DeRemer and Bill Boyle were the faculty involved with the students at the work site. Each was in charge of a team of five students. Teams alternated mornings and afternoons working at the Gallery and attending REAL academic classes at Reuther High School.

The project was hailed by many as a significant community effort. The President of Kemper Center, Jim Bradley, said: "This is an excellent

example of the private and public sectors working together to improve a community resource." The Superintendent of Kenosha Schools, John Hosmanek, added: "The Reuther-Kemper project is an excellent way to approach self-worth and dignity with our young people who have lacked the motivation to stay in school." The trade unions were supportive of the effort because it provided them with a chance to help young people and the community and to create work for their members.

The project called for students, under the guidance and supervision of journeymen carpenters and electricians, to tear out old plaster, ceilings, walls, wiring, and plumbing. This took about two weeks, working five days a week from 8:00-4:00 p.m. Once the building was cleared of debris, students placed insulation in exterior walls. Then the leveling and straightening of floors, door frames, and walls was undertaken. The house, pieced together over the years, exhibited poor engineering and construction principles. Students learned about the effects of poor construction: One carpenter remarked: "They don't build them like they used to--thank God!"

Students worked alongside experienced craftsmen who took time to explain the sequence of tasks and the purpose of various tools and who demonstrated proper techniques of construction. In some areas, for example, it was decided the strength of 4' x 8' plywood panels was needed to replace deteriorating walls. These were nailed into place by students who later covered them with wallpaper. In other areas it was determined that drywall should be used to replace plaster walls and students learned how to work with this material. The high ceilings in the building made it possible to install false or dropped ceilings.

Eventually track lighting was hung to facilitate the display of art.

Students were successfully integrated as a work team with the craftsmen. Work on the house progressed smoothly and on schedule; evaluation reports by the craftsmen indicated complete satisfaction with the students' work. The young people were inducted into an adult world where skill, quality, pride, and hard work were characteristic. In hard hats and goggles, under the critical eye of a grandfatherly carpenter, students experienced the usual banter and kidding that takes place on job sites. Both students and craftsmen seemed comfortable in their relationship.

Students were universally enthusiastic about the Kemper project, finding the work interesting, challenging, and educational. They believed they learned important skills of construction, repair, and maintenance. There was not a single criticism of the project, the role they played in it, or of the people with whom they worked. One boy commented: "It seems like school is more like real life. I used to hate school, now I look forward to it even when the teachers get on your back."

From the students' point of view, the most significant aspect of the project was the strong group effort if required. Each person was counted on to contribute and effort and accomplishment were important not only for the individual but for the success of the group. One boy stated: "We are like a big family--the kids and teachers helping each other; we're working together as a group." Others noted that it was a new experience to have students and teachers work together, doing some of the same tasks and having the same goals.

When the project was completed during the first week of June, there was in succession an expression of relief, celebration, and pride of accomplishment. The students' sense of pride came in part from knowing they had contributed to the betterment of the community. It also came from knowing they had done a good job. One girl, thinking back over the entire year, saw both the Kemper project and her nursing home work as being very important to her because "they were not easy; you have to work hard."

REAL: Promise and Problems

The four staff members of REAL are an effective team who exemplify the concept of "the professional." They take seriously the challenge of inventing a new program which will be effective with youth who are difficult to educate and on the verge of leaving school. In retrospect, REAL is effective because it developed three characteristics which were not present in the regular Reuther Alternative High School. These three characteristics are: 1) an integrated curriculum built on experiential learning, 2) a structured but personal relationship between staff and students; and 3) a strong group identity among the students.

An integrated curriculum joins the community experience and classroom or academic component. This requires teachers to invent new courses and approaches to traditional subject matter, but, more importantly, to let students learn in the community. The integration of experience and academics was most notable in English and social studies. Students who worked in nursing homes took a course on "aging," instead of conventional social studies or English. They studied the problems and

issues of aging by reading the novel, The Pig Man, several short stories, and viewing films on the topic. A series of speakers discussed how their perspectives on life changed as they aged. Thus, persons in their twenties through their seventies came in succession to address changes in their values, the meaning of family, and their views of work and career. One woman, dying of cancer, was particularly effective in communicating how quickly one's perspective on life can change when confronted with death.

Students who worked in the day care centers took a "child development" course. In addition to readings on the topic, an observation project was required in which students observed their day care children in relation to various concepts studied in class. Later the students compared two children who seemed to be at different levels of development. From these observations, a paper was written describing the two children in terms of their development. The academic work helped the students understand the children while the children proved the relevance of the academic work. The course concluded with a reading of Lord of the Flies and an examination of the question of the relative importance of nature and nurture in the behavior of people.

The Kemper project was integrated with the academic component of REAL in an historical study of Kenosha. Students chose a twenty-year period of Kenosha history to study. In the papers based on their study, they wrote about people, transportation, buildings, work, leisure, and physical characteristics of the area. The goal was to create a sequence of sketches about Kenosha, including the role of Kemper Center in the county's history.

A variety of basic and academic skills are developed in this integrated approach to curriculum. Students are challenged to consider social issues, engage in research, use historical and observational methods, and present their findings in writing and orally. They internalize what they are learning because certain abstract ideas--about child development, for example--become meaningful through daily experiences at work. Similarly, social issues are more relevant when one can see the problems of institutionalized care for the elderly first-hand. The integration of academic and experiential education is a major success of the REAL program.

A structured but personalized program is a second major characteristic of REAL. One student commented that an important difference between REAL and the regular program at Reuther is the amount of individual attention she receives from the teachers. They helped her with her academic work and "they kept after us to get our work in." Previously she found it easy to "slide" because "you were only with a teacher one hour." Other students believe that some teachers let students "slide" rather than go to the effort of putting pressure on them to keep up academically. These students suggest that many teachers thereby give students the choice of doing their academic work or not: "We had the choice to not work; the freedom to attend or not. This year teachers don't give us the choice; they keep after us."

One student who responded positively to the structured, personalized atmosphere of the program is Bill. He was, by his own admission, a chronic "class-cutter" the previous year. While never completely overcoming this problem, his relationship to REAL was different from

his relationship to the regular Reuther program: "Cutting class was easy before, but now the close relation we have with the teachers makes it harder. They expect you to attend." On several occasions Bill failed to come to work and this bothered him later because "I let people down when I didn't come to work." This strong sense of personal obligation to the adults in the program indicates that the rules and expectations of the program are taken seriously and have greater authority than was previously the case for these students.

The third characteristic of REAL is the development of a strong sense of group identity and loyalty among the students. To the students this is the part of REAL which stands out. Mary, for example, pointed out that many of the activities were planned in part by the students and this made them feel a sense of ownership of the program. The decision to renovate the Kemper house was made jointly by students and staff, as were other less-dramatic decisions, such as painting their classroom.

In addition to a sharing of decisions, there is also a sharing of common experiences. All worked at either a day care center or a nursing home; they shared experiences from these places in class. All donned hard hats to strip and rebuild the Gallery into something both they and the community can take pride in. The teachers worked alongside them to achieve a common goal. The result, as one student commented, was a "close-together feeling . . . we are just like a family."

The self-contained nature of the program and a high degree of student-teacher contact is essential to building this sense of group

unity. Both the closeness of relationships and the continuity of contact between staff and students sustains the identity. The kinds of work that the program calls for are concrete and generally agreed upon as valuable and worthwhile. Such experiences contribute to a sense of group identity.

A common thread running through the three characteristics that make REAL an effective program is the emphasis on experiential education. Without exception, students express satisfaction with the experiential component of REAL. School is seen as providing positive rather than negative experiences, because of the satisfaction and success students earn in the community sites. Pat DeRemer, the coordinator of the program, believes that the experiential component is the basis of an enhanced self-esteem which comes from concrete achievements. The experiential component is the cornerstone around which the other aspects of REAL are built. The behavioral changes which students are required to make at their work sites (punctuality, responsibility) carry over into the classroom, resulting in greater academic success.

Therefore, REAL is effective with students, but are there flaws in the program? Several nagging problems concern the staff. Despite the enthusiasm of students and the positive evidence about the program, the number of students who stayed in the program from September to June is only 50% of the original population. Calculating the dropout rate from REAL presents difficulties because the number of students beginning the program was uncertain. The intent was to have twenty-five students begin in the fall. However, attrition occurred immediately with the death of one student and the lack of engagement by a number who said they intended to enter. By the end of the first semester, the staff

had dropped ten students, at least half of whom never seriously participated. Some of the others dropped out during the semester for a variety of reasons. Laura, for example, who was enthusiastic about her day care work and praised by her teacher as effective with the children, dropped out at the end of the first semester to take a job as an aide at a day care center. The principal thought it best not to replace students who left the program. By the time Kemper project began, ten students remained in the program.

A retrospective analysis by the REAL staff and observers suggests that a tougher stand in the description of expectations and standards for school and work performance might deter uninterested students during the selection stage. Also, norms set at the beginning would be easier to maintain later. In any event, the staff discovered there is a very narrow line to walk between being understanding of student problems and demanding strict adherence to program rules and expectations. Willingness by the staff to confront quickly the students who are not making satisfactory progress in their academic work or meeting behaviorial expectations at the work site might result in some dropouts changing their ways in time to avert this action.

At the end of semester one, five students earned the maximum of 3-1/2 credits, two earned 3 credits and three earned 2-3/4 credits. Five others earned 1-3/4 or less during the semester and fell further behind. These students eventually dropped out. Those ten who showed average or better progress stayed in school and have an excellent chance to graduate.

LEAP

Lincoln Educational Alternative Program
Lincoln High School
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

LEAP: Lincoln Educational Alternative Program

Lincoln High School, home of LEAP, is located in Wisconsin Rapids, a city of 18,000 in central Wisconsin. Wisconsin Rapids flanks the Wisconsin River and its access to hydroelectricity and the surrounding forest coalesce in the paper industry, the main employer in the area. With the paper mill the main industry, Wisconsin Rapids can be characterized as a blue collar community.

Lincoln, the single public high school, is fed by two junior high schools and eleven elementary schools. The high school is located on the southeastern edge of the city. It is a large sprawling building composed of six modules. The building is three years old, spacious and well-appointed, including extensive shop facilities and a swimming pool. Upon entering the building, there is a large student commons/cafeteria area, a sunken lounge for upperclassmen, and display cases with student art, athletic trophies, and posters promoting extracurricular activities. At the main staircase there is a large stained glass mural, a student's work, and quilted cloth murals adorn the stairway. Thus, the school presents a pleasant face to the visitor. Light, airy, ornamented, with good facilities, Lincoln is an attractive, humane environment for the 1800 sophomores, juniors, and seniors and 60 teachers who frequent its interiors.

Lincoln's catalogue of available courses is striking for the

breadth of offerings: three foreign languages; a wealth of industrial arts, agriculture, and home economics courses; experience-based educational programs. The wide range of opportunities extends to a one-year program for students not presently succeeding in conventional classrooms. This alternative is LEAP, Lincoln Educational Alternative Program.

LEAP began in the 1978-79 school year with two teachers and 25 students. The program was proposed by three administrators, who, with school board approval, hired two teachers to develop and begin LEAP. The program helps students finish high school and thereby lowers the dropout rate. Jan Cain and Jim Chaffin were hired in January, 1979, to develop a program and begin it second semester. Jim and Jan are still with LEAP.

The thrust of LEAP is simply stated by Jim:

> LEAP is often the only alternative to dropping out of school. It may be the only place students can get the self-confidence and/or study habits needed to succeed in conventional or mainstream classes at Lincoln.

LEAP is a two-semester program geared for juniors who are credit deficient and unlikely to graduate if they continue as they have been. The year with Jim and Jan is intended to boost both their self-esteem and their basic skills and work habits. They develop a more positive attitude toward school which results in better grades. Students are expected to complete their senior year in mainstream classes.

LEAP students have some common characteristics. Between third and sixth grades they developed a negative attitude toward school and stopped attending or stopped doing the work. As high school

students, they were then unable to keep up because they had missed some basics, especially in English and math. Furthermore, as one student said, they were often too proud or too stubborn to ask for help. Mainstream teachers with 30 students in a class have little time and/or patience to help such students. The result of the situation is students begin to feel hopeless about graduating. This hopelessness typically leads to dropping out.

Also, LEAP students are generally not adept at social skills. Because of years of failure in school, they find it difficult to ask a teacher for help or negotiate for a passing grade, as more successful, confident students routinely do. They are easily frustrated in their work and will give up when they reach a block.

LEAP attacks these sources of school failure directly. Through intensive, consistent work with students to build their self-confidence, their basic skills, their perserverance with assignments, and their ability to communicate with teachers, Jim and Jan replace the cycle of hopelessness with the belief that the world is rational and, thus, understandable and manageable. The idea that each student is in control of her/his life is the underlying theme of LEAP.

Beneath the flow of psychology lessons, math, English, science, and social studies is a consistent aim to put students in control of their lives. Jan and Jim pursue this goal by promoting close, trusting relationships among LEAP members, by teaching psychological concepts that explain why people act the way they do, and by encouraging students to ask for help when they cannot handle school or personal problems alone. Gradually, students learn to see the world as rational,

to better understand themselves and others, and to develop the capabilities and self-confidence needed for determining the course of their school, and beyond-school, lives. The three interrelated components of LEAP--the close social relationships, the psychological orientation, and asking for help--result in students actively shaping their lives, rather than simply reacting to stimuli or passively accepting their situations.

Fundamental Principles

The LEAP "family"

Basic to the instilling of self-confidence and trust in others is the establishment of cohesive, warm relationships among LEAP's members. Intimacy, cooperation, acceptance, caring, and reciprocal giving and taking characterize the relationships in LEAP which are summed up in the use of the word "family:"

> I like the closeness of the people in there. It's like a little family. We spend the whole day together. I like knowing people in there and being able to talk over problems.
>
> [Steve]

The teachers work hard at the beginning of each semester to build this group unity. Group games in which teachers and students get to know each other's names and personalities start everyone off on the right note. Second-semester students help the novices settle into the program's routine and expectations. There is a policy that no one puts another member down with cutting comments like, "that's stupid," or, "what a dumb question." From the start, in outward behavior

students accept each other. Similarly, a rule that confidences unveiled in LEAP go no further allows trust to develop.

Vance, a LEAP student, described how the "family" operates in a problem situation. Another student, Andrea, consistently came to school high on marijuana. The LEAP group was brought together in the lounge area, where Jim explained to Andrea that everyone liked her and cared about what happened to her. However, her drug-taking in school had to stop, for her own good, as well as the reputation of the program. Vance explained that they told her she had to stop "screwing around" or, however reluctantly, she would be dropped from the program.

This example shows how an individual's behavior is never seen in isolation from the group. The group meeting expresses both positive concern for Andrea as a member of the "family" and disapproval of her drug use, which is bad for her and for the program. Group meetings illustrate the program's intimacy, the caring, "safe" environment and the basic acceptance of people as being okay, even if some things they do need to be changed. There is also reciprocity, for Andrea will be a member of the group when some other student's actions need to be confronted. Furthermore, the "family" emphasizes the importance of communicating with others, listening to others, and expressing one's own feelings.

The "family" orientation is further emphasized in student input into program decisions. For example, in the spring when new students are interviewed for admission to the program, LEAP students are asked for assessments: will a particular prospective student be likely to

succeed in LEAP? Students who know the girl or boy give their views. Such assessments are done in confidence, without excessive criticism and with an eye to the continuing good of the whole group in the program. Student opinions and ideas are solicited and given consideration.

Similarly, students can question how the teachers handle a situation. Jim had been very strict about a girl's refusal to participate in the psychology discussion one morning. It developed into a confrontation and a stand-off between Jim and the student. The following day the girl was absent and another student, Lisa, raised the topic in the psychology discussion. Had Jim come down too hard on the student? Jim discussed his reasons for acting as he did; other students remarked on their experiences with the girl under discussion. The discussion ended with no firm agreement, but students gained a better understanding of how Jim had determined his response to the situation.

Lisa commented about this aspect of LEAP:

> If you make comments or criticisms of what mainstream teachers do, they say, 'Do you want to get up here and teach?' In LEAP you can talk to the teachers about what they do.

In the close ties among LEAP members, in the soliciting and consideration of student ideas on program issues, and in students being able to question teachers about their actions, LEAP has a decided purpose: social integration of individual students. Such social integration carries advantages for the students, e.g., receiving help with personal problems. It also carries responsibilities, e.g., following the norms of the "family."

Psychological perspective

The second component of the LEAP program is a psychological per-

spective that gives students a way to view the world as rational, understandable, and predictable.

All LEAP students must take Jim's psychology class first or second hour of the day. It combines formal or traditional psychology class, in which developmental human psychology is studied, and a group discussion, in which students can talk about personal problems. In the formal sessions, the principles of human behavior are stressed. For example, students learn that childhood experiences influence adolescent and adult behavior and, hence, the latter is made understandable. Moreover, Jim emphasizes the study of adolescence and the identity crisis that is associated with the teenage years. Thus, students learn what problems and feelings are normal for adolescents in the formal class. They discuss more and less productive responses to the problems of adolescence, e.g., escaping through drugs versus trying to talk to one's parents about disagreements. In these formal parts of psychology class, Jim is a relatively neutral, nondirective teacher, a conveyor of information.

In the group discussions, on the other hand, he provides more direction or guidance for individual students. Mike, in one morning session, told how irrationally his mother was acting and how difficult her actions made his life. He had tried talking to his father, but his dad evaded the issue. Jim explicitly coached Mike in how to get his father to sit down and talk about what his mother was doing. On other occasions, Jim suggested how a student was being used by a group of friends and ways to resist or extrapolate oneself from the situation.

Underlying both aspects of the psychology class--the formal teaching and informal discussions--is the idea that human behavior is explicable. One's own behavior can be understood, as well as the behavior of parents and teachers. Learning the basic tenets of psychology increases students' knowledge of the ways in which behavior is both predictable and controllable. Awareness of one's feelings and thoughts is a prerequisite to being in control of one's behavior. Jim's direct coaching of students in how to talk to adults helps their taking charge of situations.

Asking for help

The third basic component of LEAP is that asking for help is a positive thing to do. Though students may understand why adults or parents act the way they do, knowledge is not always sufficient for handling difficult situations. Students need to know when to ask others for help and to know that they can depend upon other people.

In many contexts LEAP promotes talking to others and asking others for help. As already mentioned, psychology discussions are based on students sharing their problems with the group. Jim and Jan, from their first meetings with prospective students, are good listeners. They are also adept at getting students to talk by asking good questions.

As part of her English classes, Jan requires that students write in a journal every week. They can write on any topic, and some students use the exercise to tell Jan things which they cannot express orally. Clearly asking for help, one student wrote that he was going to commit suicide the next day. He did attempt it, but was not

successful. Although this is a most dramatic example, the journals are a steady form of teacher-student communication.

In still other instructional practices, Jan encourages students to ask her and each other for help. Math classes are individualized and students do the work in class. There would be a long waiting line to ask Jan questions, if she were the only source of help. However, Jan tells students to rely on each other, to ask their neighbor for help with a problem. This, students say, differs from mainstream classes where teachers do not want students working much with each other.

Both Jim and Jan are available for students to talk to outside of class. Occasionally, students visit them at home on weekends and they seek them out as counselors in school. Peg, for example, asked to talk to Jim after school. Something was bothering her. However, during sixth hour, she burst into tears in Jan's English class. She sat in the lounge until class was over and then talked to Jan about the problems. A lot of what the teachers in LEAP do is act as interested, helping adults to kids whose problems can be overwhelming. Thus, Jim and Jan teach psychology and social studies and English and math, but, also, they are sympathetic listeners and accepting. Their definition of themselves as teachers includes the development of social and emotional growth, as well as cognitive growth.

In summary, three components of LEAP are the bedrock of the program. First is the establishment of a cohesive group, termed by the participants a "family." Second is promotion of the idea that the world is understandable. Other people's behavior can be understood as well as

one's own. School work, even math or science which a student may have failed once or twice, can be understood, managed, and mastered. Third, asking for help is a positive thing to do. Whether in math, in psychology discussions, or outside of class, students seek help from their peers and teachers and give help in return. This reciprocal giving and receiving becomes the glue which holds the program and the participants together.

There is a wide spectrum of skills and content built upon this tripartite foundation. In the next section, the daily operating procedures which embody the principles of LEAP are described.

LEAP Principles in Operation

A typical LEAP day begins with Jim's psychology class. The class of 12-15 students convenes in the lounge area. The beginning of class is a time for Jim to check up on each student--are they feeling and doing OK? Jim's rationale for these daily sessions is that if students talk about problems first thing, the problems do not get in the way of learning. Once the morning "greeting" is over, the group moves to the classroom area for the academic study of psychology.

Typically a student has science class with Jan next, then English with Jan, world history with Jim, lunch, math with Jan, and then two classes in the mainstream, usually physical education and an elective. LEAP provides the required math, English, science, and social studies courses. Psychology is required for LEAP participants.

Classes in LEAP are distinguished from conventional classes in a number of ways. Students have to maintain 90% attendance in LEAP;

there is no minimum attendance in the mainstream classes. Assignments must be done until they are correct. Class time is given for assignments. Basic skills, such as reading, writing, and discussing, are performed by every student every day.

Attendance rule. When LEAP students fall below 90% attendance, they stay after school until they make up the time. Jim and Jan both see attendance as a "must" for student success. Students cannot progress if they are not at school. When students are absent, they call their teachers to explain why. If Jan does not hear from them by third hour, she calls them. When students are interviewed as candidates for LEAP, Jan and Jim always make it clear that this rule is enforced. If LEAP students miss a lot more than 10%, they are dropped from the program.

Assignments. Assignments must be completed and, generally, must be correct. A mastery approach is used; students do the work until it is right. Quarter and semester grades are computed on the basis of work completed and the scores on those assignments.

Teachers "get on" students to complete work. If assignments are long overdue, the student stays after school to finish them. Tony, an alumnus of LEAP, explained how this differs from mainstream classes at Lincoln:

> In other classes, it is the same to the teacher [if you don't hand in assignments]. They just put an F down. You flunk the class. Here [LEAP] they get on you to do the work.

Jan says of this sytem that she and Jim are the students' "follow-through," reminding them of assignments until they are

finished. Eventually the students begin to operate on their own, carrying through with their responsibilities. Having an assignment due each day in class is important in getting students into the routine of doing work each day and using class time productively.

Small class size is essential for the ready assistance which students cite as crucial to their improvement. It allows them to ask teachers or peers to help them with assignments. They are not asking for the answer, just for help in getting started. Students emphasize that in many conventional, larger classrooms teachers discourage questions and want students to work quietly and individually.

Class participation. Although math is individualized, other classes are conducted with full group participation. Students must participate in class discussions. They must read aloud in class. They must learn to take notes and do it consistently. Students are not permitted to sleep or "space out." They must be attentive. If a student is having trouble staying awake, Jim will have him/her stand up for awhile.

A typical science class involves 20 minutes of reading a chapter of the text aloud, each student reading one or two paragraphs. Jan asks a few questions about the chapter, which is an introduction to a new unit. Then students read articles of their own choosing from Science World magazine. An article on left-handedness and right-handedness is applied to a recent topic of left-eyed and right-eyedness and the association with the left and right sides of the brain. Students are especially avid in applying such ideas to themselves or their own experiences. Jan says that LEAP students are adept at

connecting scientific theories or studies to real life experiences.

Students like being involved in classes. One, Karen, says that she is more interested and learns more when she participates in discussions. Mike agrees, saying he used to sit hunched down in his chair watching the clock for class to be over but "it's more fun to try to get your ideas across."

In addition to reading aloud and discussing, writing abilities are emphasized. Students write a theme a week, as well as a journal entry. Typically, the themes are only a paragraph when a student begins in LEAP. After one semester, the same student may be writing a full page or sometimes even two. Grammar and spelling are also consistently taught. Jan has a spelling test each week.

Jan says she and students "work through a lot of blocks" which LEAP students have about math, science, or writing. A student who failed math three years in a row arrived in LEAP to find she had to use the same math book again. Yet through individual help and encouragement, the student completed three years of math in two semesters. Jan says:

> In essence we make them feel better about themselves through being better in academic subjects.

In LEAP, the teachers make sure students do their work and that it is basically correct. All the classes stress making progress from wherever the student is, whether it is being able to write one paragraph or two pages. Early diagnostic testing provides a baseline against which performance is measured.

LEAP classes are similar to mainstream classes, however, in some aspects. They use the same textbooks and discuss the same topics as do students in other World History, American Problems, or English classes. The French Revolution, the Constitution, and prepositional phrases are found in LEAP as they are in mainstream classes. Nonetheless, social studies topics are not examined in as much depth, because teaching social, emotional, and basic study habits and skills also takes time. Students do more talking and applying of the subject in classes. The teachers do less of the talking. However, LEAP exists within the traditional high school areas of study. It offers the required social studies, English, math, and science courses.

Program Effects

Positive program effects are visible in a number of areas: students have better grades, an improved self-image, improved chances to graduate, and hope for their futures.

Better grades

In order to qualify for LEAP, students have to be credit-deficient. Typically a LEAP candidate has had two failures per semester since ninth grade, generally in required subjects. Because school work is done mostly in class and it must be done, students' grades improve. Many students echoed Larry's comments:

> I used to be afraid to take my report card home. I was afraid when the phone rang that it was someone calling from school. Now I like to take my report card home.

Other students added that better grades helped their relations with their parents and brought them personal satisfaction.

Attendance generally improves when students enter LEAP or they are dropped. The number of discipline referrals which students accumulate is another measure of LEAP's success. It is common for students to have five to fifteen discipline referrals a semester previous to their LEAP entry. Once in LEAP, the fighting, insubordination, and disruption of these students no longer occurs. Their all-around school behavior improves.

Improved self-image

LEAP students' greater self-confidence is visible in many subtle changes. Students openly talk about how their self-image has changed:

> LEAP taught me to be myself. Before I was afraid people would laugh at me if I wore cowboy boots and drove my old pick-up truck with country music blaring.
>
> [Larry]

> I care more about myself. I wear better clothes, have clean hair all the time.
>
> [Vance]

> They helped you to accept yourself. I got myself to go to school and I have a routine and I like it.
>
> [Lisa]

Improvement in self-image is visible in other ways. Students take more interest in their appearance. Handwriting improves. Quiet students talk more. Students reduce use of drugs and alcohol. All of these, Jim and Jan maintain, are related to improved self-esteem.

Graduation

Ninety percent of the students who succeed in LEAP go on to

graduate. Not all graduate with their class, but Lincoln welcomes students back beyond eight semesters. This percentage has increased over LEAP's four years. The teachers, counselors, social workers, and LEAP students who refer names of possible students to Jan and Jim have a good idea of the right mix of characteristics that students need to succeed in LEAP. LEAP students need at least a seventh grade reading ability. They must be credit-deficient. Many students have an emotional problem, such as a difficult family situation, often an alcoholic parent. Perhaps most importantly, LEAP candidates must be "scraping the bottom of the barrel." They have to admit the mistakes of the past and express a desire to change and a willingness to take help. "Help" comes in the forms of rules by which they must abide. In individual interviews with candidates Jim and Jan are adept at discerning which applicants possess both the greatest need and the potential to succeed.

Rekindling hope

A recurring topic in students' comments is how LEAP affects their view of the future. Mike says:

> I can plan for the future. I can do anything I want to. Before I'd live day-by-day. I got down on myself for not amounting to anything.

Lisa responds in a similar way:

> I do have potential. I can be a good student. My mom told me I was worthless. She told me that to get me to start going to school, but I started believing it.

Joel told the 40 potential students who came to hear about LEAP that he did not want to be pumping gas when he was 65. Because of

LEAP, he has a wider range of options for his future.

LEAP has a clear impact on its students as testified to by Jim and Jan and the students themselves. Self-confidence and study habits improve. Grades go up. A high percentage of successful LEAP students graduate. LEAP promotes hope and planning for the futures.

Program Drawbacks

Jan's and Jim's design and implementation of LEAP is very successful. They are constantly fine-tuning it, changing lessons or approaches which do not go over well. But, in general, the program is immensely successful as testified to by its alumni, current participants, other school personnel, and the graduation statistics.

Running LEAP as they believe it should be run is enormously taxing for the two teachers. Teaching is difficult to begin with but the intensity of contact with students who have many problems is overwhelming at times. Jim and Jan created and believe in LEAP; their dedication is enormous. However, if the program is to sustain itself for many years or without one or both founders, some adaptations may be necessary. The involvement of other responsible adults in the program, either from the community (e.g., community action workers) or from the school (e.g., counselors) might take the full burden from Jim and Jan. As it is, the responsibilities seem too great for individuals to handle for many years.

LEAP's small size is also a problem. The low teacher-student radio is crucial to quick student progress, but there are many needy

students. Each semester Jim and Jan interview 50-60 students, but only take 10 or 12 of them. The addition of staff, whether in school or on job sites in the community, might allow the program to accept more students who could benefit from LEAP.

The final drawback of LEAP is, perhaps, an inevitable problem for all alternative programs. LEAP is situated in a hostile environment. Many teachers and students view the program as un-ncessary or too expensive, or as giving special treatment to students who have not measured up to the normal standards. LEAP students are sometimes viewed as exceptions to regular school policies and rules. In such a hostile climate, an alternative program bolsters its image and reputation by being very successful. Striving for success in order to survive, it may be less willing to risk its reputation or, indeed, its continued existence, on students less likely to succeed. Thus, there may be a tendency to accept more certain-to-succeed students and to reject higher-risk ones. This tendency to accept better students, though by all measures they are also needy, can be seen somewhat in LEAP. This is a distinctly rational policy in light of the situation. However it leaves many equally needy, higher-risk students without help.

These qualifications are offered because of the program's enormous strengths and successes: there is a natural tendency to want a good thing made available to more students. Nonetheless, it is possible that increasing LEAP's size might diminish that special balance of size, personalness, and intensity which is integral to its power.

PHS

Paper High School
Oconomowoc High School
Oconomowoc, Wisconsin

The Paper High School:
A Mechanism for Creating Institutional Flexibility and Change*

There is a large classroom in Oconomowoc High School which houses an open classroom and an educational laboratory. During each class period of the day the room is used by the full spectrum of students, ranging from the most-alienated to the most-motivated. In one section of the room a group of students who have failed several of their academic subjects work together to make up the credits. At the same time, in a small room adjoining the main classroom, a group of bright and gifted students discuss Locke and Rousseau. The marginal students work independently, although there is a teacher in another part of the room; the gifted students work under the tutelage of an English teacher who has volunteered his time to teach about the world's great philosophers. All the participants are volunteers: the marginal students make up credit deficiencies and hope to graduate; the bright students fulfill more lofty intellectual interests; the English teacher is avidly interested in the subject matter and in the students' responses to it.

The room contains evidence of a wide range of program activities. Several small engines of various designs lie in one corner of the room, and Brett, who is taking a course in small engine repair, works on one of them. A bank of TV sets allows students to take courses via video, such as James Burke's series, Connections.

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*David Smith, a founder of the Paper High School, co-authored this chapter.

But the walls of the room do not represent the program's boundaries. Across town, at a special program for disabled youth, Debbie, a high school student, "interns" with a physical education teacher. In a junior high school several blocks away, a group of Oconomowoc high school students works with a local human service agency to conduct a workshop on drug abuse. Indeed, halfway across the state, a student takes a unique agriculture course at a high school in northern Wisconsin but receives credit at his home school in Oconomowoc.

Each of these examples represents accredited student activities being accomplished under the auspices of a single program, Oconomowoc's Paper High School (PHS). Each example would be impossible to accomplish in many school districts, because of institutional rigidity in matters of accrediting courses, territorial disputes between academic departments or schools, or simple logistics. In Oconomowoc, PHS serves as a mechanism for circumventing such problems and creatively responds to the diverse educational needs of youth.

Rationale for Beginning Paper High School

PHS's rationale, expressed by its founders and continuing managers, David Smith and David Furrer, is based on a broad view of the historical development of American education. Less than 50 years ago, the education of American youth was the joint, if not formal, responsibility of five separate institutions: the family, the church, the family farm, the labor market, and the school. While the particular influence of each of

these institutions varied from individual to individual, all played a major role in the education of each child. Thus, although it was very important, school was only one of five educational institutions.

Changes altered this shared responsibility for the education of youth. The minimum wage and child protection laws virtually eliminated the labor market as an effective educational force. Family farms diminished in number and churches by their own admission had less influence. Furthermore, the family relinquished much of its educational responsibility. As each of these institutions reduced its educational role, the school was called upon to do more. Schools responded by accepting the mandate to offer comprehensive education to the total population.

However, as schools became more comprehensive, they necessarily became bigger. Increased size created a situation wherein educational change and flexibility became difficult, if not impossible. Concepts considered innovative today--individualized instruction, the open classroom, cross-gradedness, and flexible scheduling--were a way of life in smaller schools.

Therefore, the challenge for the developers of Oconomowoc's PHS was to regain the flexibility and capacity for change without losing the advantages offered by large size. In addition, they wanted to offer support to institutions other than the school so that those might resume their rightful role in the education of young people.

Recently, in American education, the "alternative school" movement accepted similar challenges. Its thrust was to reduce size and promote interaction with the community. However, in the minds of the developers

of PHS, the alternative school movement had several problems: (1) when alternative programs are separate institutions and comprehensive in scope, they duplicate existing programs and facilities and, consequently, are expensive; (2) only large school districts have enough alternative school students to benefit from economies of scale; and (3) alternative programs assume that existing programs need to be radically changed, when in fact, the traditional curriculum, with minor adaptations, is often adequate. The Oconomowoc PHS developers reasoned that "alternative schools often spend too much money trying to do too much for too few students."

Nevertheless, Oconomowoc did attempt to establish a separate, self-contained alternative program. The idea was rejected by the school board on the basis of the criticisms stated above. However, this setback led to the realization that an institution need not have a building. What was needed was a new authority to legitimate and foster the creative and flexible use of existing resources. The PHS became that authority.

Created originally as a Title III, Guidance and Counseling program, PHS was given the mandate to use whatever space it could find available in the senior high school, to use whatever equipment was not in use elsewhere, to seek volunteer instructors from the Oconomowoc Public School staff who were willing to work above and beyond the contractual obligations, and, finally, to seek community involvement in terms of both instruction and facilities. To make all of this work, PHS was also given license to establish new instructional programs appropriate to the needs of individual students. A statement of the PHS philosophy summarizes the rationale for its existence:

> Creation of a small semi-autonomous school within the senior high school allowed a different kind of organizational structure to co-exist with the traditional structure but, because of its small size, it could rapidly incorporate change and experiment in well-defined and limited areas without totally disrupting the ongoing program. With any staff member involved who chooses to be involved, all staff members have an opportunity to stretch their imaginations and try different instructional methods and test newly conceived curricula. "Paper High School," then, is not a program designed to eventually take over for the traditional program but rather to provide a continuing research and development function within the total school operation. Its function is to provide for the unique needs of individual students as well as a vehicle for the gradual incorporation of new ideas into the traditional school program. It is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It is conservative in nature in that nothing that was in existence prior to "Paper High School" has been destroyed. It is not intended to replace anything but rather, to provide a new "tool" to enhance and improve upon what we already have. Because it is designed to allow for different approaches to instruction and exploring all avenues of individualized instruction, it will probably always cause discomfort to some of us. It will look different; it will sound different; and sometimes, it will make glaring mistakes. These are mistakes that can and will be corrected.

Thus PHS was mandated as a mechanism to promote flexibility and change. Its relationship with the larger high school and the community, however, was to be symbiotic, rather than competitive.

The Organizational Structure and Requirements of Paper High School

PHS functions as a school within the larger high school. As such, it has its own instructional budget, $56,000, to pay staff salaries and purchase materials. The staff includes one full-time teacher, a full-time aide, and a secretary. However, in addition to the three adults formally

assigned to PHS, other members of the Oconomowoc High School staff voluntarily provide services to the program. For example, a full-time reading teacher works in the PHS room because that is where most of her clientele congregate. Similarly, the school social worker finds students he wants to see in the PHS room. Teachers, administrators, and personnel from community service agencies are found there formally working with students or informally stopping in for coffee. Therefore, in spite of the fact that PHS has only three adults specifically assigned to it, the program attracts educators from the larger high school and professionals from the community and, consequently, provides students with a broad range of educational services. These services comprise three program components: full-time programming, special programming, and experimental curriculum.

Full-Time Programming. Some students are assigned to PHS for total programming, although their schedules may include some courses in the traditional curriculum. Prior to PHS, these students experienced very minimal or no success in the traditional high school program. They were marginal students, dropouts, or youth who formerly were placed in residential treatment. The diverse needs of this population necessitated an intensive, full-time program, but one which was flexible.

An elaborate process of entry into the full-time program provided a way of diagnosing diverse individual needs and inventing an appropriate response. Admission to PHS on a full-time basis entails a four-step process: application, recommendation, team acceptance, and parental permission. Application may originate with the student or with a referral from a parent or professional staff members. The student completes

an application which states his reasons for wanting to become a member of the program. Efforts are made to ensure that no student is placed in PHS against his wishes or his parents'.

Upon completion of the application, two recommendation forms are requested from professional staff members of the student's choice. These provide information about the student's ability, skills, and motivation.

Upon receipt of the application and recommendations, a meeting is arranged between an administrator, social worker, counselor, and PHS staff member. If they approve the application, a parent-student-staff conference is scheduled to explain the program and its expectations of students and parents. An enrollment contract is signed if it is agreed that the student will become a full-time PHS student.

Each new full-time PHS student is required to take basic I.Q. and academic achievement tests. If the student scores below accepted academic competency levels, he is required to enroll in courses that are tailored to increase his competency levels. In PHS, demonstrating competency vis-à-vis the achievement tests is not a requirement for graduation. Students with skill deficiencies must, however, contractually work on skills for as long as they are in the program.

The requirement that students work toward a particular level of basic skills is accompanied by the provision of individualized services to make the requirement attainable. For example, a reading teacher is stationed full-time in the room that houses PHS, providing a series of reading programs to improve general reading ability and facilitating the students' capacity to comprehend reading material used in a variety of courses. Similarly, individualized mathematics courses allow even

students with very severe deficits to begin an accredited remedial program. The PHS staff, in conjunction with other Oconomowoc High School faculty members, has developed a library of individualized courses in most subject areas. Many of them utilize both printed material and video cassettes.

In addition to individualization, however, PHS has the capacity, when appropriate, to work with groups of full-time students. For example, PHS offers a group guidance course designed to deal with the social development needs of youth. Taught by a team of teachers and including a guidance counselor, the course provides a group of twelve students with several hours per week of self-examination and discussion of the social problems endemic to adolescence. A second example of group programming is a course on law which PHS provided primarily for students with a history of delinquency. The course, taught by lawyers and police officers, as well as teachers, social workers, and counselors, included student involvement in community experiences related to the making and enforcement of laws.

Most of the full-time PHS students eventually return to the mainstream high school for all their courses or for selected courses. However, the open-endedness of the PHS curriculum allows them to make progress toward graduation in either case.

Special Programming. The second component of PHS, special programming, involves students in independent study courses. These provide students the opportunity to develop specific skills or enrich the regular course of study. Special programming requires the student to design or help design a unique course which he completes under the direction of a

teacher from the larger high school. For example, a student, recognizing that he has a deficiency in math, might request a highly specialized remedial math course, or, a college-bound student working with the reading teacher might develop a course in speed reading. Private music lessons, outside jobs, or a science research project might qualify as accredited independent study courses.

While any student in the high school may apply for special programming, certain conditions have to be met. A teacher must agree to help develop the course and monitor student progress. Courses must be approved by a building administrator and a staff member of the PHS. Special fees or expenses are borne by the student. Other requirements are that special programming can't be a route to early graduation and can't interfere with the student's standing in four regular high school classes and physical education. Credit is limited to one per semester and a second contract can't be established if progress in the first course is unsatisfactory.

A process was established to help students meet these requirements and to ensure that special courses meet the needs of students. This process entails three steps: fact-finding, structuring the contract, and determining credit value. Student interests, needs, and abilities are determined in the fact-finding step. For students who have a firm idea of what they want to do, the advisor's task is one of helping shape the interest area to fit the ability level. The task is more difficult, however, when students have only a vague idea about what they want. In such cases the advisor provides more guidance and may utilize the PHS library of contracts designed for other students. This process ensures

that contracts detail what is to be done (objectives), how it is to be done (means), and a method for determining if competence has been satisfactorily demonstrated (evaluation).

Sometimes, the special programming component is used by a teacher with students who are failing in their mainstream course. For example, the failing students, through PHS, may be given special remedial instruction to meet existing course requirements. Or, PHS may provide an adapted curriculum as a means for the students to complete the course requirements. While the regular teacher is party to the special programming contracts, he also secures assistance from the PHS staff in developing, implementing, and monitoring the special courses.

Experimental Curriculum. In the third component, the experimental curriculum, PHS sponsors faculty efforts to design innovative courses. While some experimental courses may be considered for incorporation into the regular high school curriculum, others are designed only to meet the immediate needs of an individual or a small group of students. Thus, the experimental curriculum overlaps the special programming component, except that it is the teacher rather than the student who perceives the special need and takes the initiative for creating the course. Given these purposes--future expansion of the curriculum and meeting the immediate needs of students--the experimental curriculum component serves the long-run needs of the high school to grow and renew its curriculum, and the short-run needs of students with highly specialized needs.

To develop an experimental course, the teacher first writes a proposal describing its objectives and contents. If the course is approved by the Directing Principal, PHS then makes the course's

availability known to students. PHS may also budget funds for instructional materials or for special needs, such as field trips. While the teacher who experiments with a new curriculum volunteers to do so and, consequently, assumes an extra teaching load, his time can be compensated by PHS allocating an aide to take the teacher's assigned study halls or hall patrol.

Upon completion of the experimental course, the teacher writes an evaluation pointing out strengths and weaknesses, suggesting changes, and recommending whether to continue it. All successful experimental courses become part of the PHS course library. Some courses with a broad appeal are incorporated into the regular high school curriculum. Others fail and are forgotten, but these mistakes are small in scale and not subject to a bureaucratic inertia which might perpetuate them. Thus, PHS provides an economical and effective research and development framework for the larger school as well as a mechanism by which educators may quickly respond to perceived student needs.

Paper High School as Seen Through Three Examples

Because PHS was designed to provide flexibility and facilitate change, it is itself in a constant state of flux. Thus, specific descriptions of its operations are quickly outdated. Consequently, the operation of PHS is best described through a series of case studies. These illustrate how the program components respond to both institutional and student needs.

Full-Time Programming: The Case of Jerry, A Gifted Student Who Almost Got Away. One of the greatest difficulties a gifted child must contend with in school is the threat that his intelligence poses to adults. Jerry, with an I.Q. over 165, perceived this problem. In addition, his parents were divorced. Problems in school combined with personal problems and Jerry developed a general mistrust of adults. Showing this mistrust and a contempt for adult values, Jerry became a "psychological school dropout:" he earned three credits in two full years of high school. Frequently truant, Jerry also failed to complete assignments or do assigned work but he invariably passed unit tests and final exams.

At wit's end, Jerry's mother referred him to PHS. During the admittance interview Jerry was flippant and contemptuous. The PHS staff suggested it was pointless to continue the interview since Jerry was obviously not interested in the program. Finding that he had succeeded in resisting an involuntary placement in PHS, Jerry reversed his position one hundred and eighty degrees and volunteered for PHS. He reasoned that "it would probably be less of a hassle than the regular program."

Initially, Jerry's attitude toward PHS was one of tolerant indifference. Under tremendous pressure from his mother to attend school regularly, he did, but his performance was minimal. He worked on an individualized contract and attended some classes but did not otherwise attempt to overcome credit deficiencies. School personnel and his mother grew reconciled to the fact that it would be a futile gesture to force Jerry to remain in school for years in order to graduate.

However, Jerry had enrolled in Decision Making, a course which provides group guidance and counseling. His intellect and natural abilities quickly put him in a position of leadership. Along with several other students, Jerry worked closely with the adult instructors of the program to plan and conduct class activities. Decision Making became the only class in which Jerry had more than a superficial interest. Finally, during one class session, when the term "commitment" was being discussed, Jerry had a sudden and exciting revelation:

> This is what I've been missing. I know what I want to do with my life and I know I need college to get there. I also know that I'll never make it the way I've been going. What I just realized is that my commitment has to be to myself and what I want to do, not to others and what they want.

The self-discovery that took place altered Jerry's perception of himself and his relationship to the full-time school program. He worked hard the remainder of the school year and attended PHS in the summer. In total, he earned nine and one-half credits during one academic year and the summer. Jerry received his diploma in August following the graduation of his class in June. He entered a private liberal arts college the following month.

Special Programming: The Case of Jeff; Would You Believe Three Diplomas?

> Two and a half years ago when I first came to this school I was a trouble maker. I was into everything; drugs, booze, stealing. I had no real direction other than to get drunk or stoned. People had no trust in me. Some looked at me as dirt or no good.

These are the words that Jeff used to describe his status in high school

before entering PHS. A number of teachers and administrators agreed that Jeff was "a hopeless case."

A member of a minority group and very tall for his age, Jeff's size and racial identity made him conspicuous and were associated with his perception that he was often singled out for blame. He established a bad reputation which did indeed lead to his being accused of wrong-doing, sometimes unjustly. His hostility toward school grew and took the form of mischievous behavior, vandalism, truancy, and refusal to perform in class.

Jeff's home life exacerbated his school problems. Due to his father's alcoholism, he was placed with well-meaning but ineffectual foster parents. While his foster mother succeeded in keeping Jeff in school physically, she failed to affect his negative attitude toward school. School policies, such as retention in the early grades, failed to have a desirable effect on Jeff's academic performance. When Jeff should have been a senior, he had accumulated only two-and-a-half credits. A teacher with whom Jeff had a positive relationship encouraged him to enter PHS.

At the referral conference, it was generally agreed that Jeff stood little chance of graduating through the usual procedure of credit accumulation. Therefore, Jeff's course of study at PHS was designed to prepare him to earn a diploma through the General Educational Development Tests.

However, in addition to preparing for the G.E.D., Jeff participated in several other courses. His enthusiasm for these courses made him a leader in them and he developed a strong psychological bond with the three adults who taught them. This new and positive relationship with

adults led in turn to Jeff's devoting more energy to his basic skills classes. By the second semester, Jeff stated that he felt ready to take the G.E.D. exams and, more importantly, ready to leave school. The confidence with which he expressed himself moved all of the teachers who were associated with him.

Jeff took the G.E.D. exams and passed all but one on the first try. After waiting the required amount of time, he retook the exam and passed it. Later, however, Jeff decided he wanted a regular diploma rather than an equivalency diploma. When the area technical school, in cooperation with a neighboring school district, began a diploma program, Jeff enrolled and earned a "real" diploma from the neighboring high school that same year. One-and-a-half years later, however, Oconomowoc initiated a similar cooperative venture. Jeff contacted PHS to determine whether he could receive a regular diploma from Oconomowoc Senior High School through the new program. Eventually Jeff was awarded his third diploma. He testified to his new status and the importance of special programming:

> Today I don't smoke pot or get drunk or steal. And why is this? Because after talking with (three of my PHS teachers) and really listening to them, and them really listening to me, I learned to be someone and be trusted. For the greatest thing that ever happened to me was the day when one of them said, "Jeff, you're one of the finest young men I have ever known." That is something I'll never forget.

Experimental Curriculum: The Case of Problem Students Becoming Teachers. People Are Coping Together (PACT) is a peer counseling program on drug abuse created by an Oconomowoc social worker and a drug abuse counselor from a community service agency. Begun on a small scale with

federal funds, PACT has grown to become a permanent elective course at Oconomowoc High School. It is a good example of the experimental curriculum component's responsiveness to immediate and long-term institutional needs.

In PACT, senior high students, many of them with drug-related problems, first learn teaching, counseling, and group facilitation skills. Then they apply these pedagogical and communication skills in supportive group discussions and counseling sessions with each other. Later, they extend their skills by offering a counseling program to students at the Oconomowoc junior high school.

A primary purpose in high school students counseling each other and younger teens is that students learn to cope with peer pressure, especially as it relates to drug and alcohol abuse. In addition, the activities of PACT--training and practice in active listening, decision making, and opinion clarification--help students cope with general environmental stress and, consequently, lower the risk of student drug and alcohol abuse. PACT stresses accurate information about drug use and school and community treatment services as well.

PACT participants begin the school year by attending a two-day, one-evening training retreat. Tents are set up on the grounds of one of the district's elementary schools. Students participate in a variety of information-sharing and human relations exercises during the retreat, but a major purpose of the retreat is to develop a sense of group cohesiveness and purpose that will carry the group through the year.

During the school year, PACT operates like many school clubs. Meetings take place on Wednesday evenings, usually in the homes of

participating students. The time and location of the meetings contribute to a sense of group intimacy and, indeed, in the meetings students discuss a range of personal problems which are rarely broached in a traditional classroom.

On PACT's half-day forays into the junior high school, one adult accompanies the 12-15 senior high students. However, each student-facilitator works independently with his group of 6-10 junior high students, illustrating the initiative, skill, and confidence each has developed through involvement in PACT.

Effects of PHS

The three PHS components provide a means for gradual institutional change at Oconomowoc High School and for a creative response to the needs of the large and diverse student population. It is, therefore, a mechanism which reduces institutional rigidity and inertia.

Moreover, unlike alternative programs, which appeal to only a small segment of the student population, PHS economically serves a wide and diverse range of students. In fact, 70% of last year's graduating class received some credit through PHS. Furthermore, by appealing to such a large portion of the senior high population, PHS has avoided the "labels" often associated with programs designed to meet the individual needs of students. If a program contains the "dropout," the "gifted," the "disabled," and the "average," what single label can one attach? PHS is a program for all of Oconomowoc's youth.

Limitations of PHS

The obvious strengths of PHS can be considered in light of the ways in which it differs from other programs which are a part of this study. Most other programs involve students in a formal group that tends to develop a unique identity, and this identity is closely tied to the goals and structure of the program. PHS, in contrast, tends to define group membership more loosely; groups may gather for only a small portion of the day, some students may work alone or only in informal groups. Also, PHS is the only program that attracts a full and diverse range of student types and abilities. This aspect of PHS is clearly part of its strength; indeed some believe it is not healthy for marginal students to identify solely with each other because the tendency may be to reinforce a "loser" image at a time when educators should be attempting to convince them that they can be "winners."

On the other hand, a highly individualized curriculum is a limitation because a group setting during at least some portion of the day may contribute immensely to adolescent development. Other programs have used positive peer groups that are stable over time as a means of promoting the network of roles, rules, and cooperative efforts important to group life. This has led to the development of traditions and mores that are carried on by students and that effectively create a positive and "winning" program climate. Therefore, while most students at PHS do work in group settings during a portion of each day, the fluctuating and loosely defined boundaries of some of these groups may be seen as mitigating against the sustained and intense group involvement found in other

programs. In fairness to PHS, however, it is clear that the PHS room does become a home-base and a point of identity for many marginal youth.

Another limitation is PHS dependence on its voluntary teaching staff. PHS could not, with existing staff, provide a team-run program for students who might benefit from an intense and consistent school environment such as those exemplified by several other programs in this study. Also, teachers outside of Oconomowoc who learn of PHS are often skeptical of the willingness of their colleagues to volunteer free time to make a similar program successful. Sometimes this skepticism is expressed in relation to the teachers' union sanctioning volunteer work in school. Many strong union members believe it is wrong for a teacher to provide services for which no monetary compensation is given. In contrast to these objections, members of the Oconomowoc faculty argue that the voluntary nature of their PHS involvement is a strength of the program. It is a reflection of their commitment to educating youth, it results in a broad base of teacher involvement in educational change and innovation benefiting the larger high school.

In conclusion, in spite of its potential limitations, PHS ranks as a very effective program, especially with respect to the number of students it serves without undo negative labeling, and because of the involvement of so many faculty who are willing to work toward finding innovative means to educate youth.

SWS

School Within A School
Parker High School
Janesville, Wisconsin

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School Within A School: Parker High School

Parker High School is a large, comprehensive high school on the far northwest edge of Janesville. It has 1515 students in grades 10 through 12. There are few minority students. At present, the city has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, with about one-third of the parents and students at Parker laid off of jobs related to the automotive industry.

Parker occupies a fully-equipped modern building. It is spotlessly clean with no graffiti or evidence of smoking. A "smoking porch" behind the school may be used before school and at lunch time. Inside displays of art, athletic posters, and club announcements enliven the corridors.

The school is comprehensive, offering an especially strong vocational curriculum, in addition to the college preparatory and general curriculum. Nonetheless, grade points are prorated by curricula so as to reflect the greater demands placed on students in college preparatory classes. Thus, an "A" in the general curriculum does not count as much as one in the college prep curriculum.

SWS: Students, Staff, and Goals

In addition to the three major curricular options, Parker offers an alternative program, School Within a School, to meet the needs of students who have little or no success in the regular program. It is funded by the Department of Labor, a grant to that agency having been written

several years ago by school counselors who recognized the need for SWS. Government monies thus make four of the five teacher positions officially allotted to SWS "free" to the Janesville district.

Students. The students in SWS look and act like other students at Parker. They are well-dressed, clean, and lively. There is little swearing in the halls or bathrooms, and next to none in class. Yet these students have had chronic problems with teachers, grades, and attendance.

Before enrolling in SWS, over half of the students had problems at Parker due to drugs or alcohol. Eighty percent were involved with the legal system in some way. A quarter said they have problems due to home situations. Almost half expressed no interest in school or perceived that school has no interest in them. The students saw themselves as "bottomed out." Therefore, with nowhere to go but up, they welcomed the second chance SWS offered.

Currently the program has 58 students, 9 in tenth grade, 39 in eleventh, and 10 in twelfth. They are evenly divided between boys and girls, and three-quarters are 17 years old or older. Most live with their families. About two-thirds of the parents completed high school and work at blue collar or clerical jobs.

Staff. On the surface, the teachers in SWS, like their students, do not stand out from the rest of the faculty. However they are the foundation upon which the success of SWS is built. The five men form an autonomous, dedicated team within Parker, working to provide a second chance to the SWS students. All have considerable teaching experience in the mainstream and some teach classes or coach athletic teams in the regular program, in addition to their SWS responsibilities. However, all

voluntarily joined the alternative program. Some cite the fulfillment they feel in helping marginal students as their reason for volunteering, while others enjoy the professional discretion and decision-making allowed within SWS. All mention the necessity and satisfaction of working together as a supportive team.

The five teachers provide a self-contained, one-year curriculum which includes math, English, reading, social studies, and science classes. In addition, there is a personal development/careers course which is linked to the jobs component of SWS. The program also has a female secretary, "one of the program's strongest backers," who provides a smile for all and an understanding ear for the young women in the program.

The team of SWS receives much of its leadership from Don Schaffner and Ollie Swanson. Don is the social studies teacher and work coordinator. Ollie is the math teacher and counselor. The two jointly teach the first hour of the day when all students meet for the personal development/career course. In addition to these two men, Roger Hanson is the reading teacher, Glenn Disrude teaches life science, and Steve Ferraro teaches English.

Goals. SWS is a one-year program aimed primarily at the immediate improvement of the general skills and behaviors students need in order to be successfully employed. While many SWS students return to the mainstream and accumulate enough credits to graduate, an equal number--credit-deficient and older--leave SWS for jobs. The program tries to provide for both groups of students.

The formal goals are:

1. To help each student reach minimum proficiency levels in reading, writing, and math.

2. To help each student build an image of himself that is consistent with his need to feel useful, needed, and important.

3. To help each student recognize how responsible behavior can lead to feelings of greater self-esteem.

4. To help each student understand the relationship between academic success and vocational success.

5. To help each student become a productive member of society.

Conventional Behaviors: Classroom, Personal, and Work-Related

The characteristic thrust of SWS, and the emphasis given to each of the formal goals, is to socialize students into conventional behaviors. For example, students are admonished to keep their hair cut and say "yes, sir" and "no, sir." These conventional behaviors are taught and required so as to increase the probability of student success on the job and in school. The teachers point out that hair cuts improve one's chances in job interviews. As such success is experienced, students change the image they have of themselves and grow in confidence. This increases the possibility that the behaviors required in SWS will transfer with the student when he leaves the program after a year.

The process of socializing students into conventional behaviors begins with admission to the program. Two SWS teachers interview the prospective student and his parents in order to explain the strict expectations of the program and to ascertain the willingness of the student to meet them. The expectations, which the student must agree to

in writing, include (1) the responsible use of chemicals; (2) regular attendance and punctuality; (3) listening to class discussions; (4) becoming aware of one's personal behavior; (5) accepting responsibility for one's actions; and (6) being respectful and courteous to others. Because many prospective enrollees see themselves as having reached as low a point as they can, they respond positively to SWS as a "second chance." In addition, the reputation of the program at Parker is one of success. Finally, SWS represents not only a second chance for its referrals, but the one last chance: if students fail to meet their commitments in SWS, they cannot return to the Janesville public schools.

Classroom Behavior. After students sign a contract with SWS, they are presented with a variety of conventional school, personal, and work-related behaviors which they are expected to follow. Initially, adherence to appropriate classroom behaviors is stressed. Students must be in school by 8:00 a.m. with all necessary texts and equipment; jackets are kept in lockers. They are to do their homework every day. They are to be polite to teachers and follow directions, but they are also expected to speak out in class and ask questions when they do not understand.

Personal Behaviors. When students successfully establish a pattern of coming on time, doing classwork, and paying attention, the program's expectations are broadened to a more personal level. A conventional appearance is encouraged: students are urged to keep their hair cut neatly and to use moderate makeup. Wearing halters or T-shirts is discouraged, and shirts must be tucked in and buttoned to the next-to-top button. Proper grammar is stressed and swearing is strictly forbidden.

Students practice setting daily and weekly goals for themselves and consider alternative ways to reach them. Students are encouraged to respect and support each other. Friendships with peers who do not follow SWS standards are discouraged.

Work-Related Behaviors. When appropriate classroom and personal behaviors are learned and practiced, these are then further extended and applied to job situations. Thus, when students practice job interviews in the personal development class, they say "yes, sir" and "no, sir," wear a tie or dress, and look the interviewer in the eye. They roleplay difficult situations which arise on the job, e.g., what to do when disciplined by the boss, or how to ask for a raise. These enactments and the actual situations require the conventional behaviors students are using in SWS.

The Process of Socializing Students Into Conventional Behaviors: School Success, Positive Relations with Teachers, and Peer Support

However, the process of socializing students to conventional classroom, personal, and job-related behaviors requires more than a mere catalog of the rules. The rules must be presented and required in such a way that students adhere to them during the year in SWS and, hopefully, beyond SWS. In the program, students accept the conventional behaviors because they experience success in the classroom, establish positive relations with teachers and other adults, and find support from their peers.

Success in the Classroom. The first, most basic change in behavior required by SWS is for students to come to school and do their work. Success in schoolwork motivates this change in behavior. Such success is promoted by the team of SWS teachers through curricular and instructional modifications and through organizational flexibility.

English provides an example of a class in which SWS students experience academic success. A mainstay of the curriculum is old-fashioned grammar and the front of the classroom is plastered with posters of the parts of speech and grammar rules. On a typical day the teacher writes a sentence on the board and students raise their hands to suggest proper labels for each word. However, what is noteworthy is the seriousness and energy with which students consider the subject matter. Frequently, students question the labels, explaining why they think their answer is better. Often a bet of a can of soda is made over the outcome.

Part of the reason for their interest is that the grammatical labeling comes into play every Wednesday in a riotous "function feud." First, the class is divided into two teams. Points are scored by properly labeling the parts of speech in the sentences the teacher writes on the board ("I carry them around in my wallet like other people carry phone numbers."). Each person on the team goes up in front in turn, but there is a group conference prior to each try. Consequently, a function feud is both a cooperative and a competitive venture. An incorrect response is buzzed with an electric buzzer. A team or individual can also be buzzed if a swear word slips out, as they occasionally do when the feuds become heated. Games are usually close, and the losers have to write a paragraph on an assigned topic. By the end of the semester SWS

classes challenge the regular English classes to feuds and beat them. In fact, feuds are so pervasive that students once bragged that "at Saturday's party we had a two-hour function feud."

Thus, the English class engages students' interest in what is traditionally a "boring" subject and provides them with real success in it, even to the extent of beating their classmates in the regular Parker program. Work is sequenced so that students gradually encounter more complex sentences. The "function feud" makes work a game, and promotes cooperation and success for both able and less-able students. Conventional behaviors are maintained by the rules of the game, without losing its excitement. Students engage in a lively interchange of banter and ideas with each other and the teacher.

SWS also promotes academic success by adding a jobs component to its array of traditional courses. Students who successfully meet program expectations are rewarded with jobs at restaurants, the bus system, the library, and small businesses. This is a significant reward to students who need the school credits that are attached to the job, not to mention the money. Moreover, the job provides them with an opportunity to connect and practice in the outside world the conventional behaviors learned in school. This, in turn, promotes further success in both arenas.

> I needed credits, so I got a job--I get credits for my job. I had to get the job myself, and the practice interviews helped. I bus and wash dishes at the Elks Club. See, that's why I want a diploma. I want a good job and want to do something with my life. [Mike]

Instructional modifications in the math class also promote student success in academics. Students are divided into groups of three or four.

Each group works in packets of material suited for its ability; thus, one packet may teach geometry, another, fractions, and a third may be the "hot-shot, tutti-frutti algebra group." In all groups, students are urged to "work together, but don't copy" on daily work. The older, smarter, quicker students are encouraged to help beginners: "It's up to you veterans to help, since everyone doesn't learn at the same speed, or start with the same ability." Grades are based on progress and improvement, not an absolute standard.

The team of SWS teachers also promotes student success in the classroom by taking advantage of the autonomy of the program and making seemingly mundane, but important, organizational adjustments. Thus, the teachers agree that each class hour will allow 20 minutes for homework. Students are not burdened with homework or study halls, therefore. Those without an elective can leave at 2:30 instead of the normal dismissal time of 3:30. Students appreciate these measures:

> Kids on the outside say it's easier. It isn't--we just do our homework in class here. [O.J.]

Other organizational aspects are important. One is class size. Classes range from 8 to 18 students, thus making individual attention and participation possible. Because grades at Parker are prorated, SWS can modify its academic demands and raise its academic rewards. Also, the autonomy of the program, enhanced by its fiscal independence from the Janesville district, allows SWS teachers complete control over the curriculum. This means activities can be tailor-made for the program. Furthermore, the team can schedule an all-day function feud tournament

with multiple play-off rounds, or an early morning fishing trip to reward Biology students whose work is up-to-date.

These measures gradually produce changes in students' estimations of themselves as students. They begin to believe they can be successful in the classroom:

> I had my first good report card in here; now I take all of them home to show my parents. [Mike]
>
> I'm shooting for straight A's. [Kris]

Positive Relations with Teachers. Students see their SWS teachers in a different light than their past classroom teachers. This different view also promotes the students' acceptance of the conventional norms required by the teachers and the program. First, students define the SWS teachers as better teachers. Schoolwork is explained more slowly, with clearly-defined steps and expectations. Students can ask questions when they don't understand and not be ridiculed.

> The teachers are more involved with what you're doing. They don't just hand out an assignment and tell you when it has to be done. [Brad]
>
> I feel like I can ask them for help better than any other teachers. They're friendly people. They have time and show you what they want done. [Paula]

Furthermore, students note that the SWS teachers are consistent in their messages and in their effort.

> They stay together on you--all the teachers try to straighten you out together. [O.J.]

Most importantly, students perceive the SWS teachers not simply as subject matter specialists, but as people who care about them.

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Most importantly, students perceive the SWS teachers not simply as subject matter specialists, but as people who care about them.

> Other teachers don't know what's really going on with kids. Here they get to know you like a friend. [Mike]

However, the caring is always expressed in conjunction with the program's expectations: because the teachers care, they insist that students behave appropriately. Two of the most influential teachers adopt complementary roles when dealing with students in order to embody both the caring and the expectations of the program. In their conferences, one portrays the "soft guy" and, the other, the "hard guy." When discipline is meted out, the "hard guy" shouts and pounds; the "soft guy" then smooths things over so that "we can all shake hands, say that was today, and we'll all start fresh tomorrow." One explained: "I prefer friendly give and take, but if I'm too friendly I'm not so effective. If they're in trouble students don't go to a teacher as a friend, they go to a teacher who is in control." The other teacher added that their goal is not just to teach history or math but to change students: "We want to enhance their lives, to help them find how to fit into a successful mold for society."

Peer Group Support. Finally, students in SWS are motivated to adopt the conventional norms of the program because of peer group support. They learn to be their own best friends in the program, particularly in the first period personal development/careers class. All students attend this team-taught class. The curriculum ranges from a sermonette on how drugs interfere with the learning process or the importance of giving

your boss eight hours of work for eight hours of pay to worksheets on salary, overtime, and taxes. Much of the time, however, the class revolves around group discussion of concrete problems facing particular students. When Sheila started her first two days in SWS by being late, the teachers asked the class for suggestions to help her change her behavior. Students suggested: "I could call her every day at 6:30," "Her brother could get her up," or "She could get a louder alarm clock." Similarly, when Clair refused to hang his jacket in his locker, one student offered to let him use his locker: "Wearing your jacket makes us look like slobs to the rest of the school." Another suggested: "If you do it three more times we ought to put you in the office to work alone for a week." With supportive but firm group pressure, Clair put his jacket away immediately after class.

A final dramatic example of the way SWS socializes students into conventional behavior using school success, relations with teachers, and peer support to promote the process, is provided by Tina. A shy withdrawn girl with straight black hair and shapeless clothes, Tina avoided other students, sitting alone at the back of the classroom. A misclassified Learning Disabled student, she was transferred to SWS when it was found that she was capable of doing schoolwork but simply refused it. The SWS teachers began by ensuring her success in the academic component of SWS. Then, they added to Tina's schedule by placing her in a CETA job at the public library where "the ladies would mother her, teach her how to act and dress." Within five weeks a transformation had indeed taken place: Tina's hair was styled and her clothes were more attractive. Most importantly, however, Tina now sat in the front of the classroom,

participating in discussions and talking animatedly with a group of friends. Thus, she was learning and incorporating the norms of the SWS program which were providing her with success within and outside the school.

Effectiveness of SWS

SWS affects its students, its staff, and Parker High School as a whole. Students earn more credits and have better attendance records. Teachers enjoy the collegiality and professionalism allowed by the program. Parker's dropout rate has decreased significantly.

Effects on Students. Students are quick to testify to a change in their attitudes because of SWS. Over and over they report that they now like to come to school, enjoy good grades, and feel they can control events in their lives. They feel as though they are part of a family in SWS and they enjoy it.

> I quit smoking pot, taking drugs. I don't party as much--I don't need it anymore. I got in here and I wanted to change. My old friends say I 'turned jock.' What I want is success and power. A power position and success is what you should have in life. [Kris]

Changes in behavior are also marked. For example, the SWS juniors (N=30) missed an average of 41.5 days of school as Parker sophomores (range: 105.5 to 5.5). As SWS juniors, the average number of absences dropped to 12 (range: 23.5 to .5). The change in credits earned is equally impressive. In their sophomore year, they earned an average of 4.4 credits (range: 6 to 0). During the SWS year they averaged 7.5

credits (range: 9.5 to 2.25). Students' grade averages jumped as well, from a D average in the regular program to a B average in SWS.

Effects on Teachers. In addition to changing student behaviors, SWS promotes changes in teachers' roles. Because the program enjoys considerable independence from the regular Parker program, each teacher determines a large share of his own curriculum, standards for grading, and the amount of work required. While there is no formal group planning time or designated coordinator, decision-making falls informally to two of the teachers: "They know our personalities; they wouldn't force anything on us." All teachers are consulted about major decisions.

As a group, the SWS teachers set the program's expectations regarding conventional classroom, personal, and job-related behaviors. Informal conferences between them may be held in the hall during or between classes. Section changes can be made on the spot because the counselor assigned to the program has the necessary power and authority. If a student is not on time, or is sick, the available staff member will call to check on him.

While SWS requires different behaviors from the teacher than the traditional teacher role does, it also offers considerable rewards. The teachers enjoy being able to make professional decisions rather than following a curriculum guide or an inflexible procedure. This enjoyment is enhanced by the fact that they act, not as individuals, but as members of an intimate, supportive team. Most importantly, all the teachers feel helping the marginal student, both academically and personally, is an intensely rewarding experience:

> I get a great deal of satisfaction because I can see progress and I have had an influence on a kid's life. In this kind of program you have more effect. It's prolonged my teaching career. If teachers were in education to accomplish something and help mankind, they'd be here. [Mr. Schaffner]

Effects on Parker. SWS has had a positive impact on Parker as a whole. Most faculty members view it positively. In fact, one biology teacher has reoriented his class to encourage goal setting procedures similar to those in SWS. A counselor credits SWS with getting "twenty hard-core tuffies out of my hair." The principal agrees: "The reason there is no grafitti and the doors are still on the bathroom stalls is due to SWS."

The most dramatic change at Parker, however, has been in the dropout statistics. Since SWS's introduction, the school dropout rate has declined significantly. The senior class, for example, loses many fewer members between September and graduation since SWS: the chart below indicates the rate has been reduced by half.

Year	Enrolled seniors, September	Graduated seniors, June	Senior Class Dropouts
1977-78	646	488	158
1978-79	639	514	125
1979-80	602	503	99
1980-81	526	472	54
1981-82	549	491	58

Moreover, SWS has had its own success. From 1978-81, there have been 194 students in SWS. Of these, 54.5% have graduated, completed a GED, or have enough credits so that their future graduation is likely.

The program also has holding power. Several students attend regularly even though graduation is an unlikely eventuality for them. In three years, only one student has been dropped from SWS.

The Limitations of SWS

While the testimony of students, teachers, the larger school, and statistics attest to SWS's success, the program does have some limitations. Most center around the program's one-year life cycle.

In general, students respond well during their year in SWS. They gain in credits, grade point average, and self-esteem. They establish positive relationships with teachers and each other.

After the year, however, the only educational option available to them is the Parker mainstream. Many find themselves unable to manage five regular classes per semester, but students are not allowed to enroll for fewer. Others miss the personal interest shown in them by teachers and lose their initiative and perserverance without it. Students also miss each other: they are spread throughout the school according to the flukes of their schedules.

Gloria's dilemma typifies that of many SWS students once their year in the program is over. During the first 2 months of the year following SWS, Gloria was absent because of a car accident. She requested homebound instruction, but none arrived. She then asked for three courses a semester because "I'm too slow to take 5." Nonetheless, she was required to take five, and, having to make up two months of work, she passed only two. The second semester, she asked again if she could take three

classes and go for an extra year. She was assigned seven classes. She didn't like the history teacher, and asked if she could take it at the technical school. The counselor said no, and would not release her credits. In addition, she admits to a "pretty bad" drinking problem. Gloria has two brothers and two sisters, all of whom dropped out of school. Her father had long predicted she would follow in her siblings' footsteps. During the second semester, his prediction came true. Gloria maintains she will come back to Parker next year. However, she asserts that what she really wants is more SWS: "I just need somebody keeping me going. I wish this was a three-year program. They could let new kids come in anytime, but the rest of us could keep going."

Gloria's needs notwithstanding, the structure of Parker and SWS make a second or third year of the program problematic. A longer self-contained program would require the development of new SWS courses in the academic subjects, for example. Additional teachers would cost additional money. An interim solution might be to schedule students in one or two second-year SWS courses. Also ex-students could be placed in the advisories (homerooms) of SWS teachers, both for continued contact with the teachers and with each other. Measures like these would provide students with some assistance in making the transition back into the mainstream after a year's immersion in SWS.

ALP

Alternative Learning Program
McFarland High School
McFarland, Wisconsin

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ALP: Alternative Learning Program

McFarland is a small community of 3,900 on the southeast edge of Madison. Once a farming village, the town has a mix of neat older homes and new ranch-style homes indicating it is increasingly becoming a bedroom community for Madison. Nonetheless, despite its proximity to the big city, McFarland retains elements of a rural way of life.

The centerpiece of the village, like that of many small towns, is it's junior and senior high school. Despite the small student body of 700 and faculty of 42, the school is comprehensive in both facilities and offerings. It offers a full range of courses, both academic and vocational, and all the amenities of a larger school including pool, auditorium, and drama area. Familiarity and informality characterize teacher-student relations in the comfortable, well-equipped, modern building. There is an effort to make all students feel at ease and a concern that all students in the community be educated. This concern is not just a part of school rhetoric, saluted each autumn and immediately forgotten. McFarland is committed to diverse educational opportunities for all students and ALP, the Alternative Learning Program, is a clear example of the strength of the community's commitment.

ALP exists to serve "special needs students," a category encompassing a wide spectrum of youth. The category includes some students who are learning disabled, some who are disaffected and likely to drop out, others who are credit-deficient and, thus, unlikely to graduate with their class, and still others who are unable to pass a required course taught by only one teacher. The guidance counselor, John

Feldner, and the principal, George Fuller, wanted to provide a "home base" for these students; a place where they would receive specialized and remedial teaching, and where they would be followed up in a regular way. ALP also has been home base for an Indo-Chinese student who speaks little English and a 30-year-old woman making up a credit deficiency to obtain her diploma. Clearly, ALP's students are a diverse group.

In the 1981-82 school year ALP's enrollment was 67, 17 of whom were learning disabled. In addition to diverse needs, the students have a wide age range, from 14 to 18, though most are 15 or 16, with the one older student. There were twice as many boys as girls.

To serve such a diverse population, ALP's two goals are broad ones: to improve academic competencies and to promote vocational development. In the academic area the program provides instruction for regular and learning disabled students; remedial work; writing, speaking, and listening skills; human relations education; and practice in decision-making. The program also promotes personal confidence and self-esteem through academic success. In the vocational area, ALP provides students with a work experience. There, students learn good work habits. Also, classroom work is coordinated with students' career and life goals.

Because the school district is small and has limited resources, the program attempts to meet a variety of student needs. It does so through three components: the learning disabilities component; a work experience and career orientation component; and alternative courses to remediate students and prepare them for success in regular high school

courses. The assumptions which support these components are derived from the field of special education. These include accepting the responsibility and accountability for educating these students. This is stated directly by the superintendent, Dr. Kennedy: "We have to address the fantastic needs of a group of students alienated from school--alienated and disenfranchised." Other assumptions include educating the whole student, being an advocate for the student both in and out of school, and tailoring the environment and individualizing learning programs to meet each student's specific abilities and pace. In contrast to staff who seek to socialize students into a cohesive group or instill a set of conventional behaviors, ALP teachers see their educational task as responding to the individual needs and demands of their clients.

Staff and Courses

While ALP has been in operation for several years, it also has undergone some changes. The school year of 1981-82 was a year of major change for ALP. An exceptional work coordinator and employment skills teacher left the program at the end of the 1980-81 school year. The result was a transition period which was difficult for all members of the team, and the new work coordinator chose to resign at the end of the year.

Planning for 1982-83 has re-emphasized the previous team approach with shared decision making about students, curricula, and program planning; renewed and increased emphasis on individualized education

plans (the team was given time off at the beginning of the year to create a formal plan for each student, something done only for the learning disabled students previously); and the re-integration of the work experience in the total curriculum.

The new work coordinator is also a special education teacher; this would indicate there will be greater commonality among the team, promoting cooperation and communication.

Half of ALP's staff of three teachers and a secretary has certification in special education, which may account for the program's emphasis on individualized treatment and teacher responsibility. The program coordinator and leader is Cindy Huber, who is trained in vocational rehabilitation and certified in special education. She teaches one section of ALP English, works with the eighth grade learning disabilities teacher one period a day in a student support study skills program, has one period of independent study for individual students, coordinates a careers seminar with the vocational teachers, and has one period for team planning. Working closely with Ms. Huber is Mary Lingk, the secretary/tutor. She has a degree in English, and, aside from phoning and typing, she tutors students on an individual basis. Don Milhaupt is a learning disabilities teacher who teaches reading, math, and study skills. Bob Kennedy was hired for the 1981-82 school year to be the work coordinator. His position consists of teaching Employment Skills, a second year employment seminar for students receiving credits for their job; placing and supervising students in jobs.

ALP as a program is most visible at the high school in the mornings, when most students are seen congregating in the spacious, light, and colorful ALP suite. As noted, the program is highly individualized; it is a different program for each student. A student may have as many as four ALP classes or as few as one. Typically, a student has Employment Skills first hour, a required course for those with jobs. This is followed by ALP math, an individualized program of packets of lessons that students do at their own pace. ALP English is taught third hour. Most students then have classes or study halls in the regular program. Those with daytime jobs leave school at 11:30 to go to work. They are transported in a school-owned bus, for which they pay $1.00 per day. These students return for the final period of school in the afternoon. Those who do not have jobs attend regular classes, and they are often back in the ALP suite in the afternoon for Mr. Milhaupt's consumer math, study skills, or remedial English.

Program Characteristics

ALP's adherence to a special education model of schooling affects the program's design and operation. For example, one predominant feature of ALP is the extended role of teachers. This feature follows from the assumption that the school and teachers are responsible and accountable for student success and progress. A second characteristic of the program is its high degree of individualization. The third main characteristic of ALP is its loose structural linkage with McFarland High School and a tighter linkage with parents and the community.

Extended teacher role. The extended teacher role begins with an understanding that education involves the whole student, not just the mind of the pupil. The intellectual, emotional, physical, and social facets of students are integrally related, and thus all affect academic progress. This means the personal life of the student is of interest. Students are viewed as individuals and as friends. Classroom atmosphere is easy, at times loud, with students allowed to call teachers by their first names. This informal and personal behavior is something the teachers prefer.

> This is a one to one program which addresses idiosyncrasies. I like the informal approach and being perceived as a friend. [Bob Kennedy]

Treating the student as a whole person might involve simple acts, such as talking about the recent Ozzie Osbourn concert, modeling how to talk to one's father about new clothes, or calling a student who is late to roust him out of bed. It may also involve more complicated interventions by teachers. Many of these center around students' home situations. For example, one student's father is an alcoholic and beats the mother. The mother and the son left the home one night after such a beating, moving into the mother's sister's house. When the boy arrived at school, anxious and unable to study, Cindy intervened. She took him into her office where she calmed him down and discussed the situation in a rational way. She facilitated communication between the mother, sister, and student, relieving some of his questions about where he would stay and how he would get his clothes. Beside attending to his immediate emotional and physical needs, Cindy suggested that attending an Alateen meeting in Madison might be helpful. She offered

to drive him to those meetings as long as he wanted to attend. In another case, Cindy intervened when Roxanne ran away from home. Acting as an advocate, she mediated the conflict between mother and daughter and Roxanne returned home. Recognizing that such family disruptions make academic learning difficult, Cindy and the other ALP staff help students resolve them so that they can refocus on their studies. The teacher role and the counselor role thus converge.

> I'm a combination of a teacher, counselor and a friend, a qualified friend, perceived as one who can be trusted--who gives guidance and advice. [Cindy]

In both of the cases, the student's welfare was broadly defined and the role of the teacher was to intervene to keep the student functioning in a school program. In order to accomplish this, teachers must be sensitive and knowledgeable about the needs of individual students. They must also be ready to respond with strategies that are likely to resolve specific problems.

ALP staff members also are advocates for students who are experiencing difficulties with the traditional school program. When Joe, a senior, passed both quarters of power mechanics but failed the final and, therefore, the course, he was quite upset: his graduation was jeopardized. As Cindy pointed out, "We need to do a little advocacy--this may keep him from graduating." Cindy sat down with Joe to develop a plan of action to present to the power mechanics teacher: he might retake the final, with Cindy tutoring him, or do an independent study with Cindy to make up for the test. She checked the schedule of the teacher to find when he was free so Joe could talk to him. She

admonished Joe: "Be reasonable now, tell him the options discussed." While he was talking with the teacher, the ALP secretary checked Joe's credit status. To everyone's relief, she found Joe was one-half credit above graduation requirements without the mechanics course. When the teacher did not accept any of Joe's alternatives, the ALP staff decided not to pursue the issue because it would make no difference to Joe, at least in terms of graduation.

A major facet of ALP is the teachers' extension of their role to be advocates for students in other areas of their lives. Family and emotional problems, and problems with other teachers are all part of the ALP teachers' perceptions of their job. As Cindy Huber remarked: "It's not an 8-to-4 job. People just don't happen 8-4."

Diverse opportunities and individualization. Closely allied with the ALP teachers' extension of their role is their tailoring of school work to to meet the needs of the students within the program. In the process of working with 67 individuals, the program offers a broad array of educational opportunities. Both curricular offerings and instructional techniques emphasize the student's individuality.

There are many examples, like the one of Joe, in which ALP teachers cooperate with other teachers at McFarland. The result can be an independent study with an ALP teacher as an alternative to a regular course. O.J. had difficulty in economics, so Cindy used the regular text and tutored him during her independent study time.

The work experience program is another example of curricular alternatives. The work component of ALP is a reinforcer and motivator for staying in school and also generates credits toward graduation. It

enhances self-esteem and provides support from other adults in the community for staying in school. A job placement requires enrollment in the Employment Skills class. There punctuality, human relations, and personal presentation are stressed. Students understand how the job is connected with school progress:

> I got credit for work so I can graduate with my class. And if I don't come to school I can't go to work. I like having my own money, so I come. [Missy]

ALP placed 38 students in jobs in the 1981-82 school year, primarily in fast-food restaurants.

ALP takes advantage of educational resources in the community to meet the needs of its students. For instance, ALP students earn credits in a night class in communication skills at the nearby technical college. State and local monies are also solicited to create special courses. Most ALP students take little math and, therefore, are excluded from the regular computer math course. Because the ALP staff considers knowledge of computers an important vocational skill, they found the financial support for a one-half credit summer course for ALP students. They also found support for a vocational education exploratory summer program open to all students. There is a yearly community service project to expose students to the community. In the summer of 1982, under the direction of a local expert, students restored several Indian mounds and built a biketrail in a village park. The village paid the supervisor and the school paid the students.

Perhaps one of the most nontraditional uses of educational resources in the community is the relationship of ALP with a local G.E.D.

program, the Work Experience Bank (WEB), operating out of a nearby church. This program provides three days of work and two days of intense tutoring for the G.E.D. In the case of Fred, who was in difficulty with his regular classes, behind in his ALP classes, and had unsatisfactory performance on the job, the ALP staff met with his parents and the principal and suggested that ALP was not the program for him. WEB was deemed a more appropriate setting. Fred later dropped out of school and entered WEB.

The most successful of ALP's curricular alternatives is the Stress Challenge physical education course. Many ALP students are credit deficient in physical education because they don't want to dress in gym clothes or shower after class. The president of the ALP advisory committee, Phil Williamson, designed and leads an alternative physical education course.

Modeled after Outward Bound, the Stress Challenge program takes a group of 15 students and teachers through a rigorous obstacle course, including a "spelunking" exercise and rock climbing. The enrollment quota is quickly met, and the response to the program is enthusiastic. Students meet one afternoon each week for eight to ten weeks, making up any work they miss in other classes. The strenuous physical demands of the final exercise promotes cooperation and group problem solving among the participants and self-esteem and inner strength upon completion. Also, each quarter session concludes with a banquet. Students receive a certificate of recognition and a T shirt which pictures a mountain climber saying, "The higher you get--THE HIGHER YOU GET." This is one of the few totally cooperative and group-oriented activities in ALP and

the only one on a regular basis; it is also the most popular of ALP's many curricular innovations.

In addition to providing a wide variety of curricular alternatives, ALP individualizes instruction so the task and environment are appropriate for each students' ability. When Kathy, a senior, experienced problems keeping up with her business machines class, with up to 24 daily assignments undone, the response of ALP was to schedule her in a one-to-one tutorial with Mary, the secretary/tutor. Mary provided help, support, encouragement, and an occasional verbal "kick in the pants." The one-on-one relationship and the quiet and relaxed environment of the tutorial gave Kathy the opportunity to make progress.

In the math course work is done through a series of sequential packets. Lessons range from the most elementary addition and subtraction with practical examples, such as balancing a checkbook, to more complex work in story problems with fractions and decimals. However, there is some cooperative work, in that students who are working in the same packet are encouraged to help each other. Also, the teacher is readily available to answer questions because ALP classes are small in size.

The ALP English class is also individualized, but not through the use of separate sequential packets. Instead, all the students have the same assignments, but expectations are higher for some students than others. Good readers are counseled to read more difficult books; slow readers have easier books suggested to them.

When Jennie could not do an assignment requiring her to watch the evening news on TV because she worked then, Cindy arranged to have the

next nights' news videotaped so she could watch it during a study hall and then complete the assignment.

There is a weekly spelling test, but retakes are allowed for those who do poorly. As in the math class, competency is stressed and practical functional skills are emphasized. For example, one unit focuses on writing a resume, an important task in preparing for job interviews. One student used his resume to apply to a state youth conservation camp.

In its curriculum and its instructional techniques, ALP emphasizes individualization. The student is offered a wide variety of educational experiences. Everyone is not expected to learn the same body of knowledge or skills. The experiences are structured so that the student works on appropriate tasks at an individualized pace. In the process the student's needs are met without his being stigmatized as a slow learner, and students learn to accept individual differences.

Structural support. The third distinctive feature of ALP is the organizational structure in which it operates. ALP has considerable autonomy from the larger school in which it is located. Moreover, it is closely linked to the parents of students and to the McFarland community. This structural arrangement fosters ALP's independent identity and operations.

ALP's autonomy is a vital ingredient of the program. Without its independent status and the time for coordination and leadership, the teachers' ability to extend their role and to offer alternatives to students would be truncated. ALP teachers, in effect, operate a school within a school; in fact the program proposal calls for it:

> The program operates similar to a school within a school, with its own set of policies and procedures. Attendance, discipline and behavior problems are handled within the structure of the program itself with the principal's support and cooperation.

This autonomy was made clear in an incident with Doris, an emotionally disturbed adolescent accepted into ALP because her parents would not allow her to attend the ED program. One morning Doris came into math class with a large hunting knife in a sheath. She took it out and showed it to her friends at the math table. The teacher suggested that she put it back in her locker, but Doris refused, maintaining that someone would rip it off. The next period, a regular math teacher, Mr. N., brought it to Cindy and said Doris had been waving it around in the halls. Cindy then decided on a course of action that met Doris' and the school's needs. Because the principal was out of the building that day, she arranged a meeting with the vice principal, Doris, and herself. During this meeting the problem of the knife was discussed: who it belonged to, why it was in school, and that having such a knife in school was against the rules and normally resulted in suspension. The knife was confiscated, and Doris' parents were called to school to pick it up. Moreover, Cindy and the vice principal pointed out to Doris that she seemed to be having a difficult day: she had caused an altercation on the bus that morning and had cursed at her job supervisor in the cafeteria. The meeting concluded with Doris being offered the use of either of the professionals' offices as a cooling off place if she needed it. She stayed with the vice principal for a while and then returned to class.

In this case the program, through the coordinator, set its own rules and procedures different from those of the larger school. This defused the situation, calmed the student, and provided her with a safe refuge should anything similar happen in the future.

Nonetheless, ALP must work cooperatively with teachers in the regular high school program. When ALP teachers negotiate with regular teachers as advocates for their students, the success of the negotiations depends on a base of goodwill. ALP teachers consciously develop this base. Don, for example, now spends "social" time with regular staff, deliberately not talking about kids. He feels that if they know him better as a person he will be more effective when he has to intervene on behalf of a student. Similarly, Cindy has given an inservice on ALP, has planned all the monthly inservices for the faculty, and has had the ALP parent group give a breakfast during National Education Week and Vocational Education Week. These actions have broadened support for ALP. However, the principal at McFarland acknowledges that a contingent of regular teachers feels that ALP over-protects and pampers its students. Their disapproval is reflected in a math department request that all ALP math classes be classified as remedial, no-credit courses. Such action would, of course, be extremely detrimental to ALP and its students.

ALP looks outside the regular high school faculty for support as well. An active parent support group meets monthly at the high school to discuss program developments and provide services to the program. When the rooms needed brightening, for instance, the parent group arranged to have the paint donated and painted the rooms bright blue

and yellow. They also prepared the breakfast for the faculty. When ALP held a "New Games Festival" and invited students from two other schools to a nearby state park, the parent group cooked lunch for all. In addition, the parent group is a regular source of chaperones. This group promotes a positive communication link between the home and school, and between parents and students.

Other structural support for ALP comes from its close ties with the McFarland community to which it is linked through ALP's advisory committee. It reflects the pulse of the community. This committee's positive and supportive attitude toward ALP was originally fostered by "stacking" the committee with prominent and sympathetic community leaders. The village police chief, prominent local businessmen, as well as parents of ALP students, have served on it, meeting monthly to provide assistance and direction. They arrange for job placements, initiate alternative courses, like the physical education program, and push for secure funding for summer school courses to provide more credits. The advisory committee also maintains communication with the school board through its annual comprehensive evaluation of the program. This lengthy document containing student and employer comments, a description of the year, an assessment of whether goals are met or not, and other material is written, compiled, and presented to the board by a subcommittee of the advisory group.

ALP is also linked to the community through its publications. A member of the advisory committee is a printer and designed the ALP logo. It is displayed on stationery, the monthly newsletter, and stickers for all businesses participating in the jobs program.

The newsletter "ALP Hi-Lites" is unique in itself. It is sent to all parents of ALP students, the parent support group, the advisory committee, the school board, and all student employees. It has a monthly circulation of about 200. It is attractive, filled with cartoons, notes on which students are at which jobs, and what new events or opportunities are coming up.

ALP's ability to meet the individual needs of its diverse student population depends on a degree of autonomy from the regular high school and support from outside groups. While the staff seeks to improve its relations with the McFarland faculty, it also cultivates strong additional ties with its parents and the community. These provide ALP with the material and political resources it needs to individualize the curriculum and advocate for its students' emotional as well as intellectual needs.

Program Effects

The small size of the McFarland district along with its limited resources meant that ALP must be designed to meet the needs of a varied population. The breadth of program goals and staff accountability for responding to the needs of the "whole student" create an extended role for the teachers in an autonomous program. This autonomy allows teachers to determine appropriate curricula for each student; credit can be given for math at the fifth-grade level or for reading at the seventh. Special courses can be created, like computer math, to meet the needs of a subset of the population, and students can even be

counseled out of school. Teachers interact on a more personal level, listening to the concerns and feelings of students. The organization of the program provides the time and flexibility for teachers to act in this manner. It provides a great deal of satisfaction for staff. All three other staff agreed when Cindy said:

> I've been lucky, I haven't struck out on anything. It's helped maintain my idealism. I'm told I'm good at what I do; I do a good job. It's enhanced my role as a professional.

Student effects are significant as well. ALP students come to school and do their work regularly, and a high percentage of them graduate. Of the 48 seniors last year who were associated with ALP, 20 graduated, 8 are now fifth-year seniors and will graduate, 2 are fifth-year seniors who will not graduate but who are still coming to school, 10 are in G.E.D. programs, 2 are employed full time, and 6 have dropped out.

The principal and superintendent credit the program for McFarland's low dropout rate and the lack of vandalism in the school:

> There's a better environment in the building. We are reasonably sure many kids graduate or gain a sense of direction who wouldn't have. [George Fuller, Principal]

Student response to ALP is less clear. Since the program is individualized, student experiences in ALP vary, and this may account for the variety of their attitudes. For example, Dean expressed a neutrality to ALP: "I don't look forward to it and I don't look down on it. I plan to graduate on time. I don't think I could make it through another school." Mike, on the other hand, stated clearly that

he'd rather be in regular classes. However, he admitted ALP "does help a lot."

In contrast to Dean and Mike, Gail maintained the ALP kept her from dropping out of school: "When I first came in I didn't care about anything. Now I'm trying to do my best so I can graduate." Rich agreed and pointed to one of ALP's strengths: "I'm happy here. If I feel bad I know I'll get a smile, and after five minutes I straighten out." Deb's commitment may sum up many students feelings: "I still don't like school, but I come now."

Limitations

ALP emphasizes an individualized approach to its students and this accounts for much of the program's success. On the other hand, there are few elements in ALP that encourage cooperation or group cohesion. The notable exception is the popular Stress Challenge course. The students' positive response to this course suggests that, despite differences in their ability to learn, they share common needs which can be met through group projects. In fact, one of their needs as adolescents may be the need for a supportive peer group.

Furthermore, ALP's emphasis on individualization demands a great deal of its teachers. Not only do they have to devise curricula and modify instructional techniques to meet students' varied intellectual abilities, they are expected to counsel students and support them in their familial and social relationships. Cooperative group activities and the development of a strong peer group that was supportive of ALP's

norms could share some of the burden. Despite these limitations, ALP has developed the kind of autonomy, structure, and strong community and parental support that should be modeled by other programs.

ADOP

Academic Development Opportunity Program
West Division High School
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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ADOP: Milwaukee West Division High School's Academic Development Opportunity Program

The Academic Development and Opportunities Program, ADOP, is a special program for urban, primarily poor and minority, youth who failed ninth grade and, therefore, must repeat their freshman year. The program, designed by staff at West Division High School in Milwaukee in 1981, was implemented in the 1981-82 school year. It is housed within the larger school and is designed to serve as many as 100 students.

Recent changes within West Division as a whole, initiated by a new principal, better serve the students, 80% of whom are minority and 80% of whom are from economically poor families. Some changes have improved the physical environment: the school entrance, which was cluttered, is now kept tidy; school trophies have been returned to trophy cases; waiting rooms in the guidance office are more comfortably furnished. Other changes involve policy. For example, the new principal advocates a "tough love" approach to school discipline. Thus, rules and policies are consistently and surely enforced and greater effort is made to ensure that the enforcement is even-handed and caring. These changes have had a positive effect on West Division as a whole.

Within this context, the ADOP plan calls for even more radical changes in school practices. The possibility of these changes leading to success with hard-to-serve youth is evident if one carefully examines the program's birth and first year of operation. Such an examination includes attention to the characteristics of the ADOP target population, the original plan devised to serve that population, the process of

implementing and adapting the plan, the program in operation, and program outcomes.

Determining the Target Population

In the spring of 1981, a committee of six educators from West Division High School was given a mandate by the principal and central office to plan a school intervention to reduce the school's rate of dropout. At the time, the student population of the entire school was 1,100 but approximately 40% of the students (446 students) were in ninth grade. Many of the ninth graders failed all or most of their courses during the previous year and were repeating the grade, some for the second or third time. A profile of the grades received by the freshman class revealed that 86% failed at least one course, 67% failed three or more courses, and 23% (105 students) failed all their courses.

Thus, the committee observed that as West Division students proceed through the high school years, the size of each class diminishes, with the steepest decline in class size occurring between the freshman and sophomore years. These data suggested that the most immediate need was to affect the school program for unsuccessful ninth graders, and consequently, the committee tailored its mandate to the design of a program for ninth grade repeaters.

Why were these students failing? And, what could the school do to stem the tide of failure? These became the central questions of the committee.

A Profile of the Ninth Grade Repeater

At West Division High School, 80% of the students are of a minority race (77% black; 3% Hispanic, Native American, or Asian) and 80% of the students are from economically poor families. Consequently, overarching whatever other characteristics are identified is the cluster of problems facing the urban poor. In general, ADOP youth come from homes where the parents did not graduate from high school, where education is not valued to the degree it is elsewhere, where physical and emotional illness in families is a barrier to school success, and from neighborhoods where there are quick but illegitimate routes to economic success. In addition, many of the young women in the target population have child-rearing responsibilities for siblings, cousins, or their own children. In response to a newspaper article which was highly critical of West Division, ADOP students described themselves in the following way:

> We, the students of West Division Family Three of West Division (ADOP) strongly disagree with the October 29 editorial in The Milwaukee Sentinel. We want to share with the public some of our feelings and facts about West, to let the public know that we are students to be taught and not dropped because of what happened last year. Forget the past and think about us now.
>
> Most of us in Family Three did fail last year in the ninth grade, but we have significant reasons for failure that were not related in the editorial. We had difficult times last year with problems from our personal lives: death of a family member (32%); family problems of separation or divorce (57%); of drinking (16%); of poor health (30%); and of personal unemployment (80%).

Moreover, the educational impact of these problems is very great. For example, long before the repeaters arrive at West Division, about

one-third fail one or more grades in junior high but are socially promoted to high school. At West Division, truancy is epidemic among students who fail ninth grade, with average attendance being less than 50%. While truancy alone would account for the failure of most of these students, their academic abilities are also of concern: 67% are below the 11th percentile in basic academic achievement. As alarming as this score may appear to the outside observer, the teachers at West Division who conducted such testing in the high school over the last several years are not shocked. Indeed, the profile of the repeaters' academic abilities is not significantly different from that of the ninth grade class as a whole. Skill deficiencies, an important part of the ADOP student profile, characterize West Division students and the urban poor, in general.

Finally, a survey of the West Division faculty revealed near-consensus regarding the characteristics of the school's failing students. Thus, the faculty perceives that repeaters:

1. Are consistently late or truant (98% faculty agreement).
2. Appear to need more attention than is possible within the normal functioning of the high school; easily "bored" in the school setting; often resort to negative means of getting attention (98% agreement).
3. Have little or no motivation for school tasks and experiences (98% agreement).
4. Have a false or unrealistic sense of own abilities and of the abilities needed for success in adult roles (96% agreement).
5. See school as having little present value; at best see school as a waiting process which has little bearing on their futures as adults (95% agreement).
6. Have no long range goals or, if they do, the goals are unrealistic, e.g., to become a rock star or a professional athlete (92% agreement).

In conclusion, ADOP students share the problems associated with being poor and non-white in an urban American setting. These problems are reflected in and generate educational failure. Confronting this characterization of the ninth grade repeaters, the committee from West Division asked, what response can ameliorate the situation?

The ADOP Plan

ADOP was designed by a group of teachers and administrators from West Division who attended the Summer Institute for Dropout Prevention, held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison during the summer of 1981. The program aimed to achieve Milwaukee's academic expectations for ninth graders by tailoring its curriculum to the needs of the ninth grade repeaters. However, the program that was planned during the summer required two significant departures from normal operating procedures at West Division, departures which later proved critical to the program's development.

First, the committee's conceptualization of the ninth grade repeater problem diverged from that of most of their colleagues at West Division. The tendency in the faculty was to offer an explanation that held the students, their families, and their culture responsible for student failure. In contrast, the committee, realizing the school could do little to change the personal and family problems of students, posited an explanation that was interactional. It called for an examination of the relationship between the youth and the school, and for changes in the school in order to ameliorate the problems of the students.

Consequently, ADOP, as planned, reflects two theories of school failure, both of which focus on institutional change. First, school failure is viewed as part of a more comprehensive failure of students to formulate psychological and social bonds to teachers and other adults, to schools and other institutions representing the conventional culture, and to the social norms and mores which are part of the dominant culture. Accordingly, the ADOP plan increases opportunities for contact between youth and adults, creates school and community roles for youth which foster bonding to society's institutions, and immerses youth in the network of rules and mores that govern adult behavior.

Secondly, school failure is viewed as due to the strain created by a disjunction between a student's aspirations and the available opportunities. Students give up searching for legitimate routes to success when denied success in school or the rewards of schooling. Therefore, the ADOP plan creates new roles and opportunities in which youth can fulfill their aspirations.

ADOP incorporated both theories in its plan to integrate the academic curriculum with experiential education. By offering work and volunteer experiences in the community, ADOP responds to the particular needs of the target population. It exposes students to a wide variety of occupations and, thus, broadens their perceptions of opportunity. Also, it increases the chances for adolescents to meet and work with conventional adults in conventional roles. In addition, the community experiences require that students utilize the academic skills being learned in the classroom. Thus, the experiential component provides a concrete medium through which students can understand the relationships

that exist between school expectations, their present involvement in the community, and their social and occupational futures.

Suggested activities for the experiential component of the program included students compiling an oral history of the city's near west side, performing community service work at daycare centers or homes for the elderly, a job readiness program and a community action group. A typical school day began with physical education for all students and a joint planning period for the ADOP teachers. A three-hour block of time followed, which allowed flexibility and the chance to relate academic subject matter to the program's experiential educational component. The latter component was scheduled after lunch and after an elective class in the mainstream high school program. Thus, the experiential component was open-ended for those students willing to remain engaged past the time when school was dismissed.

However, this integration of the academic and experiential education components represented a second major departure from normal operating procedures at West Division. Crucial to ADOP as it was planned, this change constituted a redefinition of the teacher role. The program's teachers would have to assume effective leadership in the experiential component, integrate community experiences and academic subject matter, and use an interdisciplinary and team approach to teaching. Because ADOP changed normal operating procedures in two significant areas, the question became, could it be implemented?

Implementation of ADOP: The Process of Building a Program

The original design of ADOP was altered during the process of its implementation. In spite of the fact that ADOP students had failed repeatedly under conventional school practices, strong forces pulled the program back toward the conventional during its tense first year. These forces worked against the two changes necessary to ADOP's successful implementation: a reconceptualization of the focus of the problem and a redefinition of the teacher's role. The resistant forces finally crystalized in the issue to teacher autonomy.

The issue surfaced and problems began on the first day of the school year, when only one of the educators who designed ADOP was assigned to teach full-time in the program. Three other teachers, with no knowledge of the program whatsoever, were assigned to work with ADOP at noon on the Friday before the fall term began. Basic questions were their concern: "What am I to teach?" asked Miss M., who was assigned to teach science. "Physical science or biology? Have we enough books?"

During a brief meeting that Friday afternoon an assistant principal, who well understood the ADOP plan, tried to convey some of its innovations. For example, he explained to the teachers that they were free to use the three-hour block of academic time creatively. He suggested the utilization of an interdisciplinary approach and explained how several courses might be combined "topically" in a study of the space shuttle to be launched the following month. The three new teachers looked quizzically at the principal but did not, at the time, question his suggestions.

From the first day of school, therefore, the original ADOP plan was molded by the teaching team. The resolution of certain key issues

marked the battleground and the graveyard for several of the program's tenets. For example, the math and science teachers quietly ignored all suggestions to use an interdisciplinary approach. After several weeks they openly rejected the idea on the grounds that their subject areas had to be taught sequentially and in carefully staged increments. They drew support for this position from central office curriculum coordinators who had become interested in the project and had been asked to help in its implementation.

It was also suggested that the teachers design a handbook for the program which would spell out goals as well as rules for students. This idea was also ignored. In the absence of a set of rules, each teacher used his own judgment about how to handle day-to-day problems with students. This led to many inconsistencies within the program with respect to teaching strategies and discipline.

The lack of consistency and teamwork among the teachers was exacerbated by the program having no formal coordinator. Leadership fell very quickly, but only informally, to Mrs. A., an English teacher who helped design ADOP. However, in team meetings, Mrs. A. could neither achieve a consensus within the group nor assert the authority necessary to reach closure on issues. In addition, an unstated code among all the teachers at West Division prohibited one teacher from criticizing or interfering in the practice of another. Thus, Mrs. A. could merely ask for cooperation, but faculty norms allowed the other teachers nearly total autonomy.

This autonomy extended to the teachers' relationships to the assistant principals as well. One assistant principal, in an attempt to

be helpful, suggested certain classroom projects and activities. The teacher to whom she directed the suggestions felt that criticism was implied, and she let the principal know, in no uncertain terms, that such advice was unwelcome. The assistant principal then concluded that it would be futile to offer more help.

Thus, the program's teachers successfully carved out their own autonomous territories relative to each other and to the school administrators. They were bolstered in this process by district curriculum coordinators who supported concentration on the separate disciplines and use of the approved textbooks rather than interdisciplinary or non-traditional efforts. In addition, upcoming competency tests provided a further rationale for the teachers to continue teaching in much the same way they always had.

The ADOP teachers' success in resisting a redefinition of the teacher role and maintaining their autonomy in the classroom is evident in the disjunction that developed between the planned experiential component and the implemented component. Experiential education is an educational endeavor that was quite unfamiliar to the program's teachers. Though the ADOP plans spelled out suggestions for this component in detail, several of the teachers kept asking, "What are we supposed to do?" Weeks passed and only Mrs. A took the initiative to develop this component. Help was secured in the form of personnel from community-based organizations and, with their assistance, the experiential component slowly got underway. Nevertheless, for months several of the teachers expressed confusion and appeared reticent to take any initiative.

Resistance to a changed conceptualization of the repeater problem, one in which the school and its policies are implicated as well as the students, also created a gap between ADOP as it was planned and as it was put into action. For example, at the beginning of the year, some ADOP students were excluded from the gym class because they did not have the proper gym suits. They were issued gym suits one or two years before and had either outgrown or lost them. Now they held that they could not afford to purchase new suits. During the first weeks of the program these students were in heated conflict with their physical education teachers and with the man who ran the school store where gym suits were dispensed.

As the ADOP teaching team discussed this problem, an important issue was at stake: how would the program's teachers relate to the larger school? Would teachers dare to be advocates for their students, thereby contravening West Division norms that school policies are set and students must adapt? Two conflicting opinions emerged. While all the teachers agreed that the school policy had harsh implications, some held that "life is not always just": kids must learn to accept some injustice, or, at least, learn to manage it "without us holding their hands." In contrast, Mrs. A. took the position that teachers should be advocates. She engaged in a direct confrontation with the man running the school store and the problem was resolved when the students were issued new suits.

However, Mrs. A. acted unilaterally and without support from the other ADOP teachers. Some weeks later the question of advocacy arose again. Mrs. A. demanded the reinstatement of a student who had been

suspended for three days on the recommendation of another ADOP teacher. Mrs. A. was accused of undermining the authority of other teachers. At stake were highly emotional questions concerning the nature of teacher-teacher and student-teacher relationships within the program. These questions remained potent but unresolved.

These incidents are part of the broader questions of ADOP's relationship to the larger school and the relationship that ADOP teachers have with their students and each other. Mrs. A. consistently developed a program which departed significantly from the prevailing practices of the larger high school and which accepted and supported students. In her mind, forming successful relationships with adults was crucial to students' success in school. Thus, her role, relative to students, went far beyond being an English specialist. One teacher complained, "She's trying to be a friend, a mother, a social worker, and a teacher to the kids."

These and similar incidents suggest the conflict that ADOP teachers faced with regard to the question of professional autonomy. For the reasons cited, they failed to reach accord on questions of pedagogy and discipline. In consequence, the teachers retreated to the position of handling matters in their own way in their individual classrooms. The teachers were also given a very free hand by the school's administrators who did not intervene in curricular matters and who were supportive of having the team handle curricular and discipline matters within the program. Thus, ADOP teachers sought and gained autonomy from each other and from the administration.

However, paradoxically, the ADOP teachers often lamented the very autonomy they sought and achieved. Thus they complained that "nobody told us what to do . . . they (administration) didn't give us an in-service so how do we know what we're supposed to do?"

Their ambivalence about autonomy contributed to program inconsistencies and to confusion about how problems were resolved. For example, the teachers had a rationale for offering students a very conventional curricular program when they asserted they were implementing the city-wide curricular plan "as directed" by the central office. Simultaneously the central office could be blamed for not directing them in the creation of the interdisciplinary curriculum planned by the ADOP committee. Thus, the ambivalence contributed to the teachers' failure to take the initiative in inventing programmatic solutions to the problems faced by ADOP students.

In this complex web of relationships between teachers, students, administrators, and curriculum coordinators, any notion of the teacher being professionally accountable for the success of the students was impossible to implement. Teachers might fail 70% of the students in their charge and defend themselves by explaining they were "just following the curriculum guides." In other words, they could view themselves as being mere conduits of a preconceived curriculum, rather than directly responsible for ensuring that the students in their charge made progress and found success.

Therefore, the character of ADOP as implemented was not the character that was planned. In an absolute sense, it is neither an innovative nor exemplary program, although certain practices unique to

West Division were instituted. These were mild and cautious, but they had profound effects on the lives of many of the program's students.

Experiential Education: Effective Innovation

The character of the program that emerged from the processes described was neither the program that was planned nor a radical departure from standard practices. Seldom were efforts made to integrate the academic classes. Rather, throughout the day, each ADOP teacher taught his discipline autonomously using the city's approved text and teaching in much the same manner that he had for years. By conventional standards, each individual was a good teacher. However, the differences and inconsistencies in their approaches to academics and classroom management mitigated against a team effort to provide innovative academic program.

Nonetheless, by being placed together with one group of students, however loosely, substantial changes in normal operating procedures did occur. For example, the students perceived threads of a common purpose and practice running through the entire academic portion of ADOP. Almost without exception, students said that the major difference between this year and others was an effort on the part of all the ADOP teachers to explain things to them carefully and patiently, and, when necessary, to go back over points which were not understood. "Last year," one student explained, "they'd throw work at you. If you didn't understand, that be it."

Furthermore, because they taught the same students, the teachers inevitably shared information and assisted one another. On one occasion

an observer of the program made a comment to the English teacher about how one of the students used a rumpled sheet of paper with a mathematical grid on it to do multiplication problems. She asked the student why he had not memorized his multiplication tables. Three weeks later when the observer returned to the school the student approached him in the hall and said, "What's six times nine?" After answering, the observer reciprocated by quizzing the student. He had learned his tables, making up a five year deficit in his skills. Later that year he passed the math competency test, an achievement that no one would have anticipated. In high school, mathematics is not usually of concern to English teachers because the organization is by separate academic disciplines. Most of the ADOP teachers retreated to the position of teaching only their specialities. On the other hand, Mrs. A., the English teacher who intervened in this instance, continued to extend her role in the program by taking responsibility and expressing concern for student problems that were well outside the province of English.

While some changes did occur in the teaching of academics, it was in the experiential education component that ADOP was most innovative. ADOP students had three alternative experiences from which to choose: (1) a job readiness program that taught the skills necessary to apply for and keep a job; (2) public service internships in daycare centers or homes for the elderly; and (3) a community action group that discussed as well as acted on issues that were of concern to the students.

In a sense the job readiness group cannot be defined as experiential education because it did not, in the end, involve students directly in the community. Carried on by personnel from several

community- based organizations in conjunction with one of the ADOP teachers, it did provide indirect experiences. Students learned to fill out application forms, simulated job interviews, and discussed the social and work expectations they would face as they moved into productive work. Originally the participating students were to find unsubsidized private sector jobs through their own efforts or with some adult assistance. This goal was not fulfilled, however, and led to some discouragement. Even so, students valued many of the group's activities. One participant, like others who left the group to join one of the other two options, was especially complimentary:

> It made me think about what I wanted to be . . . and that made me think about how I was goin' to get there. I decided I had to get goin'.

In the second option for students, community service, students were placed in unpaid internships in hospitals, nursing homes, and daycare centers. They worked in these settings two or three afternoons per week and spent at least one classroom period per week reflecting on the experience.

The experiences that students had in these settings were tailored to student interests. For example, James, who was very interested in art, worked in the recreational therapy department of a nursing home, helping elderly people draw by using his own skills. James perceived that many of the patients and staff appreciated his art work as well as his instruction.

Theresa, who also worked at a nursing home, explained the importance of the caring relationships that developed between patients and students. On one occasion she missed work for several weeks due to an

illness. When she finally went back to the home, one patient was absolutely delighted to see her, having been very concerned about her during her absence. Emma, another patient, expressed caring for Theresa regularly and tried to give her money. "It feels good to have someone like you that much," Theresa explained.

Several of the students remarked that for the first time in their lives they were responsible for taking care of people who were not in their immediate family. Alice mentioned having to make a patient in the nursing home go to her room for fighting with her twin sister. "I was surprised," she said. "I was firm with her and made her go, but after, she still liked me." Sandra brought up the issue of responsibility in the context of "being needed." She related that one of the old people she worked with would pick up anything in sight and drink it. "I had to watch her like a hawk," she said. "She'd either drink someone else's drink and have trouble or she'd drink something real bad, even poison." Another student, Belinda, worked in the high school library. She stressed the fact that she had often been noisy in the library, but now the shoe was on the other foot. She was in charge of keeping others quiet.

The third option in the experiential education component of ADOP, community action, was the most visible and popular in terms of numbers of students participating. Under the leadership of ADOP's Mrs. A. and a volunteer from the statewide Positive Youth Development Association, Mrs. P., the community action group charted a course which "zigged" and "zagged" in response to student needs and interests and which in the end went a long distance both literally and figuratively.

The group began with a mini-assessment of school climate as it related to problems faced by students at West Division. As a follow-up they requested and successfully achieved certain school policy changes. Later, they took issue with an editorial in a local newspaper and, as a group, drafted a response. Members of the group also overheard a substitute teacher make what they felt was a racially biased comment and in a letter they brought this to the attention of the Superintendent. In the spring, female members of the group studied women's issues and attended a three-day conference on the topic at a local college. The entire group became interested in the Positive Youth Development Project and spent two days in Green Bay at a conference. There, many of the ADOP students formally spoke to the large audience in attendance. In addition to social issues, the group also dealt with personal and school problems faced by individuals. In these instances they learned certain communication skills: "When you were talking to the gym teacher it sounds like you were getting pretty aggressive, how could you have said that in a way that was assertive but not aggressive?" Inherent in all of these activities is the need to communicate effectively, either in writing or public speaking, in a "real world" situation.

Students had some rather unexpected perceptions about why the community action option was important to them. Jay was impressed with the fact that participants, including adults, sat in a circle instead of in rows. Asked why that was important, he replied that "in experiential education, people are more equal. The teachers and students are together."

Other students in this group were struck by their emerging capacity to communicate with others: "You learn that you can make good conversation and talk for a long time." They perceived that they were becoming competent through communicating with the school principal, the superintendent of schools, and The Milwaukee Sentinel. Finally, the students were delighted with their expanded geographic horizons: trips to Green Bay, Kenosha, and Alverno College were mentioned as highlights of the year.

In considering the perspectives of students who participated in the experiential component of ADOP, three major themes emerge: caring, responsibility, and expanded horizons. With respect to caring, the students perceived that the adults who worked with them cared about them in a way that was a least somewhat unique within a school setting. They stated that people became like a family. Moreover, adults outside the school cared for them. Students noted that in time they began to care about the adults.

The second major theme which may be identified is that of responsibility. For the first time in their lives many of the students were in positions of authority vis-à-vis the adult world. Furthermore, the tasks they performed, such as writing to the district superintendent, had real consequences with respect to the world within and outside the school.

The final theme students stressed was expanded horizons. As ADOP students went places and did things, their perspectives about themselves changed. Mary returned from the three-day conference at Alverno College convinced that she would enjoy going on to school. "I don't know if I'm

going to," she said, "but I liked it there." She mentioned how important it was to be treated like an adult, the voluntary rather than compulsory nature of college attendance, and the perception that she now felt capable of doing college level work.

Thus, the experiential component of ADOP, however shakily begun, had important results for the students who participated. Because the subject matter of the experiential education component was more spontaneous than in academic classes, the experiences could emerge from and meet the more immediate needs and interests of the students. The spontaneous and informal nature of these experiences served to bring students and teachers together in a way that was unique at West Division. That may have much to do with the empathy and understanding that existed between individuals involved in the program.

Quantitative Analysis of Program Outcomes

In evaluating the effects of ADOP, quantitative comparisons are as revealing as the more qualitative testimony of the students. Three quantitative comparisons will be made: (1) a comparison of all students' attendance and credits earned in ADOP with their attendance and credits earned during the semester prior to the program; (2) a comparison of the attendance and credits earned by students who were in ADOP but took no part in the experiential component with those of ADOP students who also received a passing grade in the experiential component of the program (Table 1); and (3) a comparison of ADOP students who succeeded in the experiential component and those who did not, holding past performance differences constant (Table 2).

The population of ADOP consists of 61 students, all of whom were repeating ninth grade. Originally there were 76 students, but 15 of the 76 never "engaged" in the program by attending and were therefore not considered to be part of the population. Also, because last year's records are not available for some students, the size of the samples may vary.

Results. The attendance of ADOP students improved from a mean score of 53.025 days absent during the previous semester to a mean score of 23.0 days absent per semester in ADOP. There was a corresponding improvement in credits earned: a mean of .578 credits earned during the entire 1980-81 school year increased to a mean of 1.949 credits earned during the first semester of ADOP. Changes in attendance and credits earned were significant beyond the .000 level.

In the second step of the analysis, the population of ADOP is divided into students who successfully participated in the experiential component and those who did not participate at all. The two groups are then compared in regard to changes in attendance and credits earned from the previous semester.

While a statistically significant level of improvement in attendance and credits was noted for the whole ADOP population, the figures in Table 1 emphasize that the greatest improvement is found among students who participated successfully in the experiential education component. Moreover, this group's success largely accounts for the success of the population as a whole. The mean number of absences for students who successfully participated in ADOP's experiential education component was 8; the previous semester it was 56. Correspondingly,

Table 1

Comparison of Sample Groups With
Their Own Record

Dependent Variables	Successful participation in experiential education component	Did not participate in experiential education component
	(N=24)	(N=16)
Reduction in mean number of days absent (spring, 1981 compared to fall, 1981).	40.625	12.3125
Level of significance, change in absences.	.000	.075
	(N=33)	(N=22)
Gain in mean number of credits (spring, 1981 compared to fall, 1981: 3.5 credits possible).	1.9976	.4205
Level of significance, change in credits earned.	.000	.05

these students, who had earned a mean of approximately .75 credits during all of the previous year, earned an average of 2.75 credits (3.5 possible) during the ADOP semester.

There were, however, pre-existing differences between the experiential and no-experiential groups. For example, the group that succeeded in the experiential education component was more successful in acquiring credit during the previous year (.7448 credits versus .3295 credits). On the other hand, they were absent more often (an average of 56.875 days versus 47.25 days). In order to reduce the effect of pre-sampling differences, the data were analyzed a third time keeping the two groups separate, but selecting from the two groups only those students who received no credit during the previous year. Analysis of these no-credit sample groups indicated that they were not only comparable in that no credits were earned, but also that there was no significant difference in previous patterns of attendance. The two groups are compared in Table 2. In this analysis of the data the experiential education group did significantly better in terms of changes in attendance and in terms of credits earned.

In addition to the three-part analysis, the entire sample (N=61) was searched for correlations that might suggest the effect that success in the experiential component of the program had on other aspects of the program. Attendance correlated positively with success in the experiential component (.60) and with credits earned in other courses (.79).

The quantitative analysis suggests that the ADOP program had a significant effect on the attendance and credits earned by participating students. While the study indicates that participation in ADOP without

Table 2

Comparison of Samples From the Experiential and No-Experiential Groups (Pre-existing patterns of attendance and credits earned have been factored out)

Dependent Variables	Successful participation in experiential education component	Did not participate in experiential education component
	(N=15)	(N=16)
Reduction in mean number of days absent (spring, 1981 compared to fall, 1981).	48.56	22.02
Gain in mean number of credits earned (spring, 1981 compared to fall, 1981: 3.5 credits possible).	2.6333	.5938

the experiential component had a positive effect, the improvement is not nearly as great as that found for the group that also successfully participated in the experiential education component. This suggests that the assignment of students to ADOP, especially in conjunction with the successful implementation of an experiential education program component, had a powerful effect on changing the attendance patterns and credit-earning ability of students who had failed ninth grade. The effect is apparently of a catalytic nature because success in experiential education correlated with success in other academic courses.

PART THREE

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS:

SOME INTERPRETATIONS AND GENERALIZATIONS

Introduction

In this part of the report we develop some conclusions, generalizations, and prescriptions for those who wish to offer an effective program for marginal students. A caveat is necessary, however, to warn the reader that some generalizations drawn from the data are not attributable to all of the cases presented. That is, some cases may, at least as presented here, offer little or no support for the insights we claim to have found. Nevertheless, each of the claims made about the ingredients of effectiveness is supported by the overall weight of the evidence gathered and represents the consensus of the research team. Our judgment, along with that of the educators we studied, is that there is a strong association between the success of programs and particular characteristics we identified. Thus, this section offers the reader a summary and an interpretation of the most significant programmatic and institutional characteristics of the six programs. The intent is that educators will be able to reproduce these characteristics in other settings.

The reader should also be aware that any list of general rules or prescriptions that make for effectiveness must be understood as derived from specific institutions with their own history and context. The assumption that any school should be able to implement a set of rules for good programs is misguided. Each of the schools we studied was fortunate in having sets of circumstances and people that could support a program. One can easily find conditions in the public schools that

make even the best ideas infertile. An antidote for this discouraging condition is offered in the final section of the report in the form of a modified voucher system.

Given a list of generalizations about effective programs, those interested in school reform have only the bare bones of a program plan. Current research on school change suggests there is a long road to travel between developing a model and achieving its implementation in some coherent form. Administrators who wish to bring about quick change from the top down encounter many roadblocks. Teachers who try to organize a grass roots movement for school change may find their efforts stymied at several turns. In this report we have not dealt with the politics of school change and program implementation. That topic deserves its own report, and to document the story of each program from a political perspective would have taken us far beyond the purposes of this research. Needless to say, each effort to develop and implement a program of the type presented here will require special preparation to make the field fertile for the ideas and strategies suggested.

The time does seem ripe, however, for proposing characteristics of effective programs in light of the recent interest in the concept of "effective schools." There has been a wave of research on this topic, although not much of it has examined marginal students or even secondary schools. It is useful to examine the conclusions of this research to determine the similarities and differences between the more general body of research and the findings we came to concerning programs for marginal students.

Purkey and Smith (1982) offer an extensive review of the effective schools research, and they found some consensus around a "familiar list" of characteristics. These are:

> high staff expectations and morale, a considerable degree of control by the staff over instructional and training decisions in the school, clear leadership from the principal or other instructional figure, clear goals for the school, and a sense of order in the school. (p. 24)

These generalizations might be useful as orientations to guide educator thinking, but they are too vague or even misleading to be used as prescriptions for specific practices. They are atheoretical statements that can be interpreted in more than one way. The lack of any theoretical context for what the generalizations mean allows for interpretations that are even contradictory. For example, "high staff expectations" can result in what turn out to be unrealistic and even punitive expectations in practice. Consistent student inability to meet expectations is most likely to result in frustration and failure. Research on marginal students indicates that some teachers' "high expectations" result in institutional bottlenecks that restrict the success of students and lead some to believe they cannot graduate.

The assertion about "clear goals and a sense of order" begs the question of what the goals should be and how order should be maintained. We observed a school in which clear goals were incompatible with the student population; an attempt was made to funnel all students through a college preparatory curriculum when less than ten percent of the students annually went to college. With respect to "order," one can

readily find schools where order is maintained in a harsh, repressive manner that seems inconsistent with the education of youth.

The finding that effective schools have "strong principals" is also one of those truisms that needs context and theory to give it a useful meaning to practitioners. Both dictators and democrats might reasonably claim to be "strong," but their behaviors and goals might be quite different. Moreover, the strong-principal maxim is possibly contradicted by the claim that staff should have "a considerable degree of control . . . over instructional and training decisions." How are we to understand the prescription of a strong principal and at the same time have staff making key decisions in areas that are usually reserved for administrators?

We combine a theoretical orientation based on adolescent social development, a set of specific case study descriptions, and a set of derived generalizations to provide a clearer prescription for practitioners to follow than they now have from the literature. The next section offers the set of effective program characteristics extracted from the study of six effective programs.

Our task in studying the six programs was to identify those factors that make them effective and, to the extent possible, to create generalizations that address common characteristics among the programs. In doing this we categorized our findings in the following way: common administrative/organizational features; the "teacher culture" characterizing the corresponding programs; the "student culture" common to the programs; and, finally, the curriculum patterns. These categories of characteristics are presented in the following sections.

Administrative/Organizational Characteristics

Size. The programs studied are all small in size, in terms of both students and faculty. Student numbers ran between 25 and 60. Faculty numbers ranged between 2 and 6. Small size is essential to provide for control of students and also to provide personal, face-to-face relationships between students and faculty. Also, small size facilitates student to student interaction; all students know each other and this contributes to a closer feeling among the students, a factor they identified as important to them. The small size with its more intimate personal relationships was an important contrast to what many marginal students had previously perceived as impersonal, uncaring, and even hostile environments in the mainstream high school.

Autonomy. Autonomy is another administrative/organizational characteristic all programs had in common. Some, of course, had more real autonomy than others, but each one vested authority in program staff that was not held by teachers in the regular high school. The programs symbolized this autonomy by having their own space that was clearly identified by all in the school. Each program had a unique name that gave it identity--REAL, LEAP, ADOP, ALP, SWS, and Paper High School.

More important than these symbolic factors were the facilities teachers controlled to make their program run smoothly. In several programs (SWS, REAL, PHS, ALP) there was an aide or program coordinator who managed many of the day to day matters that were necessary to the functioning of these programs. The aid or coordinator typically had a

phone for direct access to students' homes and community resources. This was especially important when there was need to check on the whereabouts of a tardy or absent student. Requiring these programs to do their business out of a central office through secretaries would have been a great handicap.

Most of these programs also created teacher autonomy by giving the staff control over many decisions frequently retained by administrators. In effect, some teachers took on administrative duties to make their programs function. It is important to note, however, that administration of these programs was carried out in a personal style that kept them from becoming coldly bureaucratic for students and teachers. The small size and face-to-face relationships of most programs facilitated an exercise of organizational power that was both efficient and judicious.

In several of the programs teacher autonomy extended to control over admission and dismissal of students, awarding of credit for courses, and the development of special courses within the program. Teacher control over who was to be admitted was important to create the air of "selective" programs. It also gave teachers control over the range of student problems with which they were willing and able to deal. For example, SWS, LEAP, and REAL did not take Special Education students, since there were already adequate programs for these students. The genuine power to dismiss students from the program for inadequate performance or persistent rule violation was also important for teachers to have; it established who had authority and maintained that authority in the hands of those who dealt with the students on a daily basis.

Similarly, the direct control by teachers over courses and credits gave teachers leverage in dealing with students. At REAL and PHS, for example, teachers could award extra credit for contractually defined work which allowed students to make up credit deficiencies. AT SWS teachers and students jointly planned a special physical education course that avoided the objections students had with the regular offering. At REAL teachers and students decided during the second semester to renovate the art gallery and coordinate some academic courses with this activity. This empowerment encouraged teachers to take initiative in solving problems which otherwise would stand in the way of program and student success.

In addition to the sense of empowerment and opportunity to take initiative that comes with autonomy, teachers exhibited a quality of program ownership not ordinarily found in high schools. They wanted their students to succeed, and the autonomy gave them the means to create conditions that made student and program success more likely. Student time and energy could be tightly structured by the staff to prevent students from failing by not coming to class or not doing assignments. The whereabouts of each student was closely monitored, and therefore it was difficult for students to "slip through the cracks" as they had done in the regular school.

In general, then, from an administrative and organizational perspective, small size and autonomy empowered teachers to structure their programs, make important decisions about students and curriculum, and develop face-to-face relationships with their colleagues and students.

All of this created a directness and efficiency in the organizations that facilitated achievement of the intended goals of the programs.

A final observation about program administration concerns the "public" nature of working in them. The face-to-face relationships that occurred between teachers, students, and the community made teacher actions public and frequently observed. The unintended but desirable result was that teacher behavior was more uniform and less arbitrary toward both students and colleagues. The enforcement of rules and standards, for example, had greater consistency, and this contributed to the view generally held by students in these programs that they were treated fairly and humanely by the adults.

Teacher Culture

The term "teacher culture" refers to the shared assumptions, beliefs, values, and behaviors by teachers that serve to organize a program and give meaning and purpose to regular, daily routines. It is not the case that the assumptions, beliefs, and values can be discovered by reading what people have written about their programs, although certainly some insights can be gained from reading the rationales and formal statements. It is essential in understanding teacher culture to spend a period of time watching a program in action and discussing with teachers the reasons behind the actions they take and the language they use. The patterns of activity that characterize a program are shaped largely by teachers, but it would be a mistake to ignore the role

students play in creating program culture. We will examine the student factor in the next section.

Professional accountability. The most important common element in the teacher culture contributing to the effectiveness of the six programs was the belief that all students deserved the second chance given by the program to learn and become responsible citizens. Furthermore, the assumption was that until proven otherwise all students can learn and become responsible; every effort would be made to change previous patterns of failure into patterns of success for students. These positive beliefs about students resulted in a commitment to be accountable for the success of the very students who, up to this point, had been found "hard to teach."

This sense of professional accountability found among the teachers was often expressed as a public responsibility to help the individual student become prepared to enter the adult world. However, a teacher's responsibility is more than to the individual; it is important to society that educators are effective with the marginal student because this group contributes disproportionately to society's problems, such as crime, unemployment, and welfare. As a group, the teachers in these programs felt an uncommon sense of personal and professional obligation for being effective with those students who have the most problems, not only in school but in their personal lives.

Extended role. In order to be effective with marginal students, teachers practiced what we have labeled an "extended role." Teachers almost never took the position that their responsibility was only to teach their academic specialty. Instead, they believed it was essential

to teach the "whole student." The implication for practice was that teachers needed to deal with the personal, social, and psychological needs of students as well as their academic needs.

The extended role often included an attempt by teachers to help students establish a sense of values and moral direction to their lives. In almost all cases teachers in the effective programs exhibited strong personal values in the classroom because they wanted students to take control of their own lives, resist the negative influences that often surrounded them, and establish positive behaviors that would lead to success at a job and in relationships with people. This value-laden dimension of the teacher-student relationship came across most clearly in matters of sex (practice birth control), drugs (don't use them), and social relationships (learn to act in the right way and say the right things).

Sometimes the student was simply admonished to hold the right values and attitudes and exhibit proper behaviors, but in other situations teachers taught students strategies for dealing with adults and communicating with people so that values could be acted upon. ADOP, ALP, SWS, and LEAP each tried to help students clarify their values and then act upon them. ADOP and ALP each had a teacher who would be an advocate for students when problems arose in school; this was done to help students solve their own problems and also protect the rights and interests of students. At SWS concerns over drug abuse by students prompted teachers to intervene with a variety of strategies, including nonschool counseling and the promise of a job, for those who showed a desire to move out of the lifestyle they had fallen into.

As described in several of the case studies, socialization to conventional values and behaviors was a clear objective of the programs. At REAL the volunteer work at nursing homes and day care centers emphasized, among other things, punctuality and regularity of attendance. SWS stressed the benefits students would receive in the world of work if they displayed the appropriate work attitudes and behaviors. ALP also sought to teach students how to be successful in the world of work; being successful on the job was nearly as important as being successful in school.

The practices that resulted from an extended role communicated a sense of "caring" for the students. It was generally recognized by the teachers that they needed to establish a personal relationship that would demonstrate that they cared about what happened to the student. There was no single way to establish this quality of relationship, and teachers seemed to use strategies that best fit their personalities. Some were warm and friendly and expressed serious concern about the welfare of the individual. Teachers like this would periodically check with an individual about a particular problem he or she might be having. This is illustrated well at LEAP where the teacher systematically devoted some time at the beginning of each day to student problems, frequently focusing on a particular individual who needed help.

Another way in which "caring" was exhibited was through "tough love." In this form students were confronted with their problems, rule violations, or inadequate performance in a stern manner that challenged the student to "shape up." In confronting a student, a teacher could be quite harsh, issuing strong reprimands for specific offenses. This

strategy was almost always concluded, however, with a warm handshake or other positive sign and a statement by the teacher indicating that tomorrow was a new day with a chance for a fresh beginning. Teachers using the "tough love" approach would sometimes say, "I am critical of your behavior because I care about you." The message was that rules were enforced and expectations were maintained because it was in the best interests of the student. As one teacher said to a group of students, "When we stop yelling at you that means we don't care about you anymore."

Teacher expectations. Expectations regarding behavior tended to be both uniform and high in most of the programs. Attendance, punctuality, civil treatment of peers, strict observance of rules about smoking and drugs, conventional modes of dress, and even a total ban on profanity in the SWS program, all contributed to a pleasant atmosphere during the daily routines of most programs. In contrast to the stereotype of marginal students as sullen, hostile, and generally difficult to control, teachers often commented on the pleasant relationships that existed in their classrooms. The maintenance of high standards of behavior was further evidence to the students that the adults cared about the welfare of both individuals and the program in general.

While high and uniform expectations regarding behavior were the rule in most programs, academic standards were treated somewhat differently. These were seen as variable and flexible depending on the teacher's judgment about the academic ability of the individual. In short, there were two kinds of expectations that were kept separate in the minds of the teachers. This distinction was important in helping

teachers establish fairness in the treatment of students. Teachers knew that students differed in their ability to do academic work, and correspondingly, they individualized and modified the curriculum to accommodate the range of abilities to do math, reading, and writing assignments. Both teachers and students saw different academic expectations for different students as fair. Within this framework all students were expected to do as well as they could and to do all the work assigned to them.

To individualize academic work and maximize the chances of it being done, teachers almost always provided class time to complete an assignment. There was no expectation that students would do home work at home. The class time allotted gave teachers a chance to work with students individually and circulate among the students to prod those who needed it. Those students who finished early were encouraged to help their neighbors complete an assignment. The requirement that all work be done in class permitted students to come to class the next day feeling good about being prepared and making progress.

In all programs, without exception, teachers made extra efforts to closely monitor the academic progress of students. There were usually daily inquiries regarding students' understanding of material and success in doing assignments. This was important in maintaining an atmosphere of serious purpose toward academic subjects. A number of students reported that these teachers were the first in high school to show them such concern and attention over academics.

Collegiality. The relationship between teacher and student was paramount in forming the culture of the program, but the relations among

teachers in a program were highly significant also. Several of the programs exhibited what is best described as a strong sense of collegiality. This was partly due to the mix of people who chose to teach in these programs, but it was also a function of the small size and autonomy that were described earlier. In all of the programs there was a team approach to decision making; however, the term "team" does not adequately convey the relationship that existed among the faculty. Collegiality suggests a cooperative professional relationship built upon joint decision making and sharing of power. The term implies a parity of power and responsibility based on mutual respect for the abilities and judgment of team members. Collegiality was an important element in the overall climate and efficiency of programs. It created a cooperative and collective approach to problem solving which was important in view of the autonomy most of the programs had.

Since programs were small and had their own space, contact among teachers was frequent. Staff were able to help each other carry out tasks, and it was not unusual for a teacher to step into an adjacent area and tell a colleague that he was leaving on an errand. Teachers would informally "sub" for one another, share work, and voluntarily use their free time because they knew the favor would be readily returned. There was little in the way of "legalistic" thinking expressed about contractually defined work in these situations, since the first obligation was to run a successful program. With the exception of one or two situations, the collegiality in programs was important in making teaching stimulating and rewarding work.

Student Culture

One of the most interesting and significant findings in several of the programs was the contribution made by the student culture. For the most part, students had a reputation of being withdrawn, lethargic, negative, and sometimes hostile prior to entering the program. However, both observations and testimony from teachers failed to substantiate this image of students in the program. Clearly the attitudes and practices of the teachers contributed importantly to the transformation of these students, but it appears that in several of the programs a positive peer culture developed to enhance and reinforce the goals teachers were trying to achieve. This positive peer culture was an outgrowth of efforts by the teachers to emphasize civil treatment of all persons and a cooperative effort in learning and solving problems.

The development of a positive peer culture may appear highly unusual; however there were several good reasons for its existence. In part, it came from the admissions procedures used in several programs. The image of "exclusiveness" was deliberately created by programs that had a waiting list of students who sought entry. The admission procedures were symbolic and ceremonial. They communicated to the students that they would start with a clean slate and that new expectations and commitments were required. Students had to formally apply for admission; they were interviewed by the staff; in some schools contracts established specific rules to be followed; and at ALP, REAL, SWS, and LEAP students recognized that this opportunity was probably their last chance to graduate.

Verbal commitment to the norms of a program was a way for students to admit that they needed special help to change the pattern of failure and trouble that had dominated their school life. Commitment to the program was also public affirmation by the student of the legitimate authority vested in the program and its staff. (There is an analogy between this public admission by a student of the need for help in school and the public admission of a drinking problem and the need for help by members of Alcoholics Anonymous.) In short, students were willing to publicly recognize the authority of the program.

The positive peer culture was also created, in part, by the reputation that several of the programs had established over the years. Students heard from others that it was a good program, with good teachers, but that it was also a place where one had to work hard. Students believed on entry that they would get fair treatment if they kept their part of the bargain. The belief by students that program expectations were fair and legitimate led them to accept and act upon program norms. Accepting institutional norms was, of course, primarily what they had been unwilling or unable to do in the mainstream of the high school.

Peer group support for the program was strengthened with each succeeding success and positive experience. Those who saw themselves benefiting from the program supported it, and they urged their peers to do so. The critical mass of students socialized into the program created leverage to move those who were new to the program, or those who were reluctant and inclined to resist the program by passive or disruptive behaviors.

Interviews with students indicated that a substantial majority were proud of their accomplishments in the program. They correctly observed, for example, that they were working harder in the program than they had the previous year in regular courses. They saw themselves learning and accomplishing important things, both individually and as a group. This created an espirit de corps which sustained the program.

There were a variety of group activities that contributed to building a strong group identity over the school year. Some of these activities were seen almost daily in the classrooms of a number of programs in the form of peer help with math or English assignments. Some were quite distinctive, such as the "function feuds" found at SWS, the action projects and field trips taken by ADOP, the gallery restoration by REAL, and the personal problem solving found at LEAP. Each of these built a sense of group cohesiveness and support for the goals of the program. They also created an environment in which students actively urged their peers to be civil, cooperative, and supportive of those who needed help. In some situations students reminded each other to observe specific rules; for example, on several occasions students at SWS were overheard reminding a neighbor that profanity was not permitted. In other programs, REAL and LEAP for example, group meetings would be used to discuss a specific problem a student was having. Members of the class would suggest solutions and offer advice; in one situation the continued membership of a student in the program was a matter for the group to consider.

There were a number of special activities that promoted group cohesiveness in several of the programs. Picnics, softball tournaments,

field trips, weekends at youth conferences, and student-planned courses all occurred during the year. Probably the most dramatic instance contributing to group identity was found in the REAL program when teachers and students jointly decided to renovate the art galley. The challenge of accomplishing this goal created a tight bond among the participants. The result was, in their words, a "family" feeling.

The theme of "family" was also prominent in both the LEAP and ADOP programs. At the latter program, when an editorial in The Milwaukee Sentinel chastised West Division High School for its "appalling" rate of failure among students, the students responded with a letter to the editor. In describing some of their efforts to improve achievement, they wrote "We . . . are like a family. We study in school together. We wrote this letter together."

The positive peer group culture is essential, we believe, if the maximum impact of a program is to be realized. The alternative, that of a highly individualized and individualistic program, may produce success in some areas, but the burden rests primarily on the teachers to instruct, maintain discipline, and motivate students. If students will assist teachers by making programs goals their own and thereby reinforcing desired group attitudes and behaviors, then the effects of the program are likely to be much more powerful.

Curriculum and Instruction

Individualization. The curriculum of these programs was individualized in a number of subject matter areas. By individualized we mean

that in the same class students would be working on different content or objectives depending on their ability or achievement level. Math is the best example of this; in almost all programs there was an attempt to start each student at the level most appropriate based on some judgment or evidence of performance. There was no assumption by teachers that a 16-year-old student should do algebra, or know how to figure percents, or be able to multiply fractions. The general rule was to find out what the student could do and then proceed from there.

Some content areas do not lend themselves as well to individualized work, and, at times, teachers wanted students to learn much the same content. However, the teachers we observed found ways of establishing variable expectations for students' achievement. For example, while all students at REAL were expected to learn about "child development" or "aging" in their English-Social Studies class, teachers varied some of the students' tasks depending on differences in ability levels. The primary consideration in each program was to provide students with academic work that was challenging but could be accomplished. Individualizing and accommodating for differences among students were calculated to break the failure syndrome that most of the students had experienced in school.

Cooperative learning. Based on student reports, one of the important changes students experienced in the alternative programs was cooperative learning in academic courses. The prominent role the positive peer group and "family" played in these programs has already been described. An important contribution was made by having students teach each other and learn in small group settings. The explicit value

that teachers developed in class was the appropriateness of helping a friend or neighbor learn. Students at SWS, for example, were constantly encouraged to help one another with math because, as the teacher was heard to say, "I can't get around to everyone who needs help." The "function feud" was another example of cooperative team learning combined with competition to spur both interest and effort in learning grammar.

Problematic curriculum. Some of the most effective curriculum observed in the programs occurred when the subject was "problematic," that is the topic or issue being studied was, in fact, a real problem to be solved. Unlike math problems or spelling problems which have, right answers, genuine problems occur for students when they are personally involved in some way and no clear answer is available. Could the REAL students accomplish the task of renovating the art gallery? What should the students of ADOP say in response to the editorial in the Sentinel disparaging their school, teachers, and personal abilities? What should a LEAP student do to improve his ability to communicate with his parents in a difficult home situation?

These somewhat dramatic examples of problematic curriculum were not, of course, daily events. Several of the programs, however, did emphasize a problematic approach in more systematic ways. Studying child development, for example, resulted in the problem of students engaging in their own study of those children with whom they were working at their day care sites. These same students were required to write in a log or discuss problems they had encountered during the week at their site. SWS students had to figure out their weekly earnings

after taxes and social security deductions, including any time-and-a-half wages they might have earned. The first hour of LEAP often was spent talking about personal problems one or more students might be having. ALP regularly helped students solve their problems with other teachers through more effective communication.

Based on observer judgment, the problematic quality of curriculum was successful with students because it achieved greater involvement and more serious effort than more conventional content. Student ability to respond to problems in serious and intelligent ways was impressive to the observers. Moreover, the myth that marginal students were only fit to deal with basic skills and routinized tasks was shattered. Those teachers who utilized a problematic conception of curriculum were convinced that this was the most valuable approach to learning for their students.

Experiential education. The most significant insight gained from the study was the effectiveness of an experiential curriculum. Experiential education is defined by its use of activities outside the classroom and conventional subject matter. Typically these activities involve students in community service, career internships, political/social action, community study, and outdoor adventure. These activities put the students in new roles and provide opportunities for involvement with people and institutions not ordinarily accessible in the traditional school curriculum. These new roles and opportunities include service to others; interaction with people different in age, background, or race; involvement with people successful in a career; inquiry into social issues; and achievement of some physical

accomplishment. Such experiences are designed to be educational in that teachers and other adults are involved in selection, guidance, and reflection about the events that occur.

The effective programs that we studied did not all have an experiential education component as just defined; however two met the criteria (REAL, ADOP), and two more (ALP, SWS) had strong vocational components which approached the concept of experiential education. We have described in some detail in the case studies the impact of experiential education in REAL and ADOP. In our judgment and in the judgment of the teachers, this was the single most powerful element of these two programs. The vocational components in ALP and SWS were also important in the effectiveness of these programs, again based on the judgment of both observers and teachers.

The primary differences between a work component and an experiential component is that the former tends to emphasize monetary rewards for students, is more limited in the range of activities and roles a student can undertake, and is not as likely to stimulate reflection about social issues. Experiential education is more likely to place students in a problematic situation where they can use their own ideas and try out new skills and abilities. While work experience programs intend that students will learn vocational skills on a job, the opportunity is ordinarily at an entry level and thus sharply restricted.

Despite the more restricted possibilities available in a work experience component, both ALP and SWS students reported valuing this experience. Both programs were built around the work component, and it provided important leverage in achieving other aspects of the program.

The chance to get a job was one of the reasons cited by students for entering the program and accepting its rules and expectations. In both programs there was a effort by the teachers to coordinate classroom and academic work with the job experiences of the students.

It was, however, the effects on students from the experiential component at REAL and ADOP that argues for the use of this conception of curriculum in programs for the marginal student. In both programs the students clearly had been disadvantaged and school failures by all conventional criteria. If such a curriculum can have a positive impact on this type of student, it deserves the most thoughtful consideration by educators. In Part Four of this report, an in-depth look at experiential education is provided to help educators understand it better and create such opportunities in their schools.

Summary

The following chart summarizes what were found to be the primary characteristics of effective programs for the marginal student:

Characteristics of Effective Programs

Administration/Organization

1. Small size: 25-60 students; 2-6 faculty
2. Teacher autonomy: program identity (name) and space; special facilities (phone, secretary, aide); control of program administration; i.e., power of admission, dismissal, course offerings, credits, and content

Teacher Culture

1. Optimism about student success; students get another chance
2. Professional accountability for success accepted

3. Extended role: teachers believe in educating "whole student"; practice "caring," advocacy; strong values exhibited

4. Teacher expectations: high for student behavior; variable for academic achievement

5. Collegiality: cooperative, team effort; program success is rewarding experience for teachers

Student Culture

1. Public admission of need for help

2. Positive peer culture; students support program goals

3. Cooperative effort by students to achieve

4. "Family" atmosphere

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Individualized curriculum in a group setting; students start at own level

2. Cooperative learning strategies employed

3. Problematic content; "real" problems for students

4. Experiential education; new roles and opportunities (most promising element in effective program)

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PART FOUR

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION:

A CONTEXT FOR ADOLESCENT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The single most promising finding of the research on effective programs for the marginal student is the impact of experiential education. There is enough promise in this conception of curriculum to explore it in some depth for the implications it holds for educating those students who gain little from the conventional curriculum. In this part of the report we explore some of the research literature that examines the effects of experiential education programs on youth. A number of principles are offered to guide those who wish to generate experiential education that is broadly developmental. In the concluding section we suggest a policy that seeks to promote a richer offering of experiential education curricula than the public school system now offers its adolescents.

Experiential Education: A Context for Development

What does research tell us about the possibilities of a developmentally-based curriculum for the marginal student? There is a dearth of research examining experiential learning with development as the dependent variable, however Hedin (1979) created such a course entitled "Action Learning: Teenage Health Consultants." She had 26 senior high students divided into three subgroups according to their stage of development. The stages were pre-conventional (ego-centric), conventional ("good boy--good girl"), and conventional (authority of law and order).

The curriculum consisted of three experiential components "conceptualized to match the three developmental levels above--low, middle, and high stage" (p. 76). The three experiential options were fundamentally similar but designed to respond to the developmental needs of each group. Each level of experience was built around (1) an opportunity for active role-taking, (2) an opportunity for making decisions on important issues, (3) an appropriate structure for both field experiences and a reflective seminar, and (4) subject matter corresponding to the tasks, needs, and concerns of the subgroup.

These four criteria were used in creating situations to challenge students' current ways of processing information and experience. The strategy was to "stretch" the thinking of students by deliberately creating an element of cognitive conflict. Moderate dissonance is required, according to developmental theory, to produce movement and growth. Hedin stated that developmental theory required the experiential component to "jar the students out of their typical patterns of thinking but . . . also provide sufficient support so that the dissonance did not become intolerable or insurmountable" (p. 77). Since there were three stages represented in the three subgroups, three matching levels of experience were required to promote development.

The low-stage group taught a mini-course in first aid or nutrition to elementary. The students were given a "high degree of structure, clear and relatively simple tasks, close adult supervision, gradual increase in responsibility and initiative . . . and a practicum regarding skills in role-taking" (p. 152). The middle-stage group "included a medium degree of structure, role-taking experience which

required understanding persons somewhat different from themselves" (p. 152). Students could teach grooming and hygiene to mentally retarded children, work as an assistant in a course on human sexuality at a junior high, or design and teach a course on drugs and alcohol to junior high students. The high-stage group was presented with low structure, more abstract and complex tasks, high levels of responsibility and initiative, and absence of adult supervision. The opportunities ranged from conducting a research project on health in their school, to serving as peer counselors, to serving as interns with the district attorney's office on sexual assault cases.

Space does not allow for a detailed presentation of the results, but data from several instruments and an analysis of testimonial journals kept by participants indicate the program had positive effects on the development of all three groups. Matching experiences to the stage or level of adolescent development is not only possible but effective in terms of the growth subsequently demonstrated.

A somewhat different look at the effects of experiential education on social development is provided by Conrad and Hedin (1981) who conducted a broad survey evaluation of 27 experiential programs in private and public schools across the nation. Over 1,000 students were involved in the intensive study; another 4,000 students in 30 additional programs were part of a preliminary study. The program involved a range of activities including community service, career internships, political action, community study, and outdoor adventure.

The research methodology used by Conrad and Hedin was complex; they employed standardized instruments, systematic observations of programs

in action, students kept journals, case studies were made of students and programs, and a variety of unobtrusive measures were used. Pre- and post-testing of students compared those in experiential programs with those who were not. What were the results?

Scores on the Defining Issues Test were used to compare development in moral reasoning. Experiential education groups showed significant gains over regular program students. This finding is consistent with several other studies that indicate role-taking experiences with a reflective component are effective in promoting growth in moral reasoning. Since moral reasoning is an important component of sociocentric thinking, this demonstration of effects is important to the goal of adolescent social deve[illegible].

A Problem [illegible]ventory was devised to measure the complexity of student thinking, the extent of empathy and responsibility shown in responding to a problem, the degree of support and justification students could martial for a solution, and the kinds of alternatives they could provide in solving a social problem. The results of the instrument are mixed. However, on the Complexity/Empathy Index portion of the test, 21 of the 27 experiential groups showed gains while none of the comparison groups did. The most substantial changes occurred in those groups which combined experience with a formal period of reflection about the encounters students had.

To determine if the immersion of youth in roles of responsibility that required actions affecting other people had any impact on the students, a test of Social and Personal Responsibility (SPRS) was devised. The SPRS contains five subscales addressing sense of duty,

social welfare, social efficacy, competence, and performance. Of the 27 experiential programs examined, 23 showed positive gains on all five subscales, while none of the comparison groups changed. The career internship students showed the most dramatic change with community study and action groups the next largest gain.

In another area, it was found that students who entered into collegial relationships with adults "tended to show large, consistent changes on the semantic differential scale toward more positive attitudes toward adults" (p. 9). These positive changes were found in 22 of the 27 experiential groups tested; comparison groups actually showed a decline in attitudes toward adults.

One of the most promising findings of the Conrad and Hedin research is that measured gains on the various scales were not affected by either grade point average in school or socioeconomic status. Only age (probably correlated with stage of development) had any influence over test results. "The general findings of no strong relation between student demographic characteristics and program effectiveness does support one common contention of experiential education: that such experiences can benefit a wide variety . . . of students" (p. 15). This finding is important because it holds out the possibility that marginal students can be substantially affected by experiential programs, in contrast to the ineffectiveness of most other programs tried to date.

The research data reported by Conrad and Hedin suggests that experiential education is a relatively powerful intervention with the potential to promote a broad notion of development. The social bonding criterion is addressed by placing youth in positive roles where contact

with adults on a collegial basis can promote attachment, commitment, and belief. A sociocentric viewpoint is fostered by requiring the kind of responsibility for others that is found in social service roles. The reflective seminar promotes sociocentric thinking as well as abstract thinking. The potential for challenging youth both socially and intellectually in ways that school has not done with conventional curricula would seem substantial in experiential education.

In creating an experiential curriculum designed to promote adolescent social development in the marginal student, five general principles can be used to structure the experience. These principles are designed to establish opportunities for youth that result in increased social bonding and stimulate both abstract and sociocentric thinking. Schools must apply these principles with students 14 to 18 years of age, who are discouraged by traditional school, feel inadequate to many of the tasks required in class, and who need to acquire a set of positive experiences which signal self-worth.

First, there is the principle of optimal challenge with manageable conflict. Experiences can be either too easy or too difficult. As indicated in Hedin's research, there are different kinds of levels of challenges which are variously appropriate, depending on the characteristics of the students. The task for the educator is to challenge students enough to create constructive tension and dissonance. Some students who lack confidence or skills will be overwhelmed by an activity, while others will find the same task interesting and challenging. Students must be "stretched" by the need to respond to a challenge, but they must be capable of "stretching" enough to meet the

requirements of the task. Challenge and conflict provide a means for moving people from concrete and pre-conventional to abstract and conventional thinking.

A second principle is that experiences should require students to take initiative and responsibility. Frequently concern is expressed by adults that youth are unprepared or unwilling to accept proper responsibility whether in school or in the community. This claim, whatever its justification, must be framed in the context of an opportunity to take initiative. Obeying rules and conforming to norms and expectations should be seen in relation to a person's ability to make decisions and exercise some degree of autonomy. Experiential education can help youth develop social bonding by arranging opportunities for them to take action in conventional settings.

A third principle for educators to follow is that experiential components must be perceived by youth as having integrity and dignity. Those youth who experience a sense of integrity and dignity will find their participation rewarding. This is likely to establish the strong social bonds required for development. On the other hand, phony jobs or "make work" projects typical of some youth programs may be tolerated but they will be counter-productive in terms of bonding. Educator knowledge of youth is important in that some activities may be seen as lacking dignity by lower SES youth who see them as confirming their lower status in a traditional type of job. Other youth, particularly middle-class youth, may be willing to engage in the same work under the assumption it is temporary and a step to more satisfying roles.

A fourth principle is that experiences should provide youth with opportunities for acquiring a sense of competence and success. In responding to manageable challenges requiring initiative and responsibility, adolescents should be able to see themselves becoming more skilled as persons. They need to sense they are able to affect their environment in some constructive manner; the satisfaction of doing a task well should result. In the contemporary society there seem to be few opportunities for youth to engage in "real" work which can provide satisfaction through competence and success. This is crucial to the marginal student who has found little reward in school work. Experiential education can provide opportunities to try out activities and roles which may not otherwise be available. These opportunities can provide the social bonding to conventional roles.

A fifth principle concerns the need to help youth engage in reflection about their experiences. This intellectual process is especially designed to assist in the cognitive shifts required in moving from concrete and pre-conventional to abstract and conventional thinking. It may be that reflection is the principle that distinguishes most clearly between good experiential programs and other programs that have sought to provide youth with learning outside the conventional classroom. The reflective period with adult guidance is essential to stimulate students to consider a whole range of questions and issues. This reflection needs to be problematic in that students should consider the meaning of conflicts they encounter. Questions should be raised about the contradictions they see between what was hoped to be and what was found in reality. Adults should help students think about the

complexity of the environment in which they must operate. This critical stance is intended to help develop the social perspective of students as they interact with both people and institutions. Reflection is most crucial for those who are at a transition point between pre-conventional egocentrism and a conventional sociocentric view.

Conrad and Hedin asked the students in their study which characteristics of the experiences were most significant to them. The responses offered by students fit nicely under the principles just outlined. Most important to their social and personal growth was the opportunity to discuss experiences with teachers, family, and friends (reflection). Next, students cited the opportunity to undertake challenging, responsible, adult roles where they could see their own ideas in action (challenge, integrity and dignity, competence and success). They valued the chance to make important decisions and to feel their efforts were a contribution (initiative and responsibility, competence and success). They also valued the personal relations with adults they developed at an experiential site (integrity and dignity).

We contend that an examination of contemporary public schools will show that few consistently offer students the kinds of experience that meet the five principles. What is worse, marginal students are even less likely to obtain these experiences through conventional courses, the remedial programs offered in school, or the special programs generated through federal funding.

In summary, we believe that experiential education programs built on the five principles described can provide the marginal students with the context and stimulation necessary for social development. Social

bonding can occur by involving youth in positive roles required in the conventional society. Qualitative changes in perspective and thinking by youth can be stimulated by the problem solving and thoughtful consideration required by these experiences. While the home and the street also have much to do with the social development of youth, the responsible thing for educators to do is intentionally provide the kind of experiences minimally necessary to provide for positive youth development.

Reforming Schools: Public Policy Implications

We believe it is unlikely that any amount of research evidence or persuasive argument will induce more than a few public schools to offer a range of experiential programs suitable for the marginal student. Instead, what is needed to stimulate the existence of experiential programs of the type suggested here is some form of "carrot." The most effective carrot may be money, and we believe that a form of voucher which can be spent to purchase experiential education will stimulate the existence of such programs, both in and out of the public school system.

The concept of voucher advocated here is limited so that students would remain in conventional public schools for some or even most of their schooling. However, upon entering junior high school each student would have vouchers that could be spent at alternative schools, private or public, that offer experiential programs. Since every adolescent would possess vouchers worth a given amount of money, there would be a stimulus to invent a fairly wide range of opportunities for youth. For

example, the Urban League, the local bar association, a hospital, local businesses, youth serving agencies, an environmental organization, and a childrens' theater might each offer programs that meet the five general principles of experiential education laid out earlier.

The quality of these experiences can be controlled in two ways. First, the natural process of competing for the students' vouchers will require programs to maintain high quality; students can take their vouchers elsewhere, if they are dissatisfied. In addition, however, we advocate the refinement of the general principles into standards to be used locally to monitor and evaluate programs. Each program would need to involve a "community council" to review its performance in meeting these standards. This community council could consist of parents, students, school board representatives, and some persons from agencies providing alternative programs. The governing control of experiential programs should remain local through these councils.

It may seem to some that a limited voucher plan to stimulate a range of experiential education programs aimed at adolescent development is too radical for public policy. However, it seems clear from existing research and evaluation literature on the array of ameliorating strategies offered to date that strong medicine is needed. At present there is no incentive for schools to do other than what they are now doing; after all they are successful with the most powerful and influential segment of society. Also, schools should probably continue to do what they were designed to do and what they do best--teach academic knowledge and skills. To the extent students can benefit from this form of schooling they should pursue it. To the extent students need a broader

and more enriched environment, they should be provided access to one. At present schools are monopolies in that they have all the economic resources and a legal hold on youth. As with most economic and social monopolies, inadequate service and even corruption can occur. It is time to break the monopolistic power of the school for the benefit of all students, especially the marginal students.

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